EXORCIST: THE BEGINNING

UNTITLED EXORCIST PREQUEL

A rewrite by

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1 THE SCREEN IS BLACK. 1

And then we begin to HEAR:

The SOUND of MARCHING BOOTS ON GRAVEL. The SOUND GROWS LOUDER, ALMOST DEAFENING, and is joined by:

THE SOUNDS OF DISTANT ARTILLERY AND GUNFIRE.

The SCREEN BECOMES LIGHTER, showing that we are CLOSE ON AN OLD MAN'S FACE: his eyes blink and quiver in time to the BOOTSTEPS, as we PAN ALONG TO:

OTHER FACES BESIDE THE OLD MAN: MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN, all terrified. We go WIDER to reveal that we are in:

A SMALL VILLAGE. The THIRTY OR SO VILLAGERS are all dressed in World War II era clothing; the company of SOLDIERS whose steps we have heard are German Waffen SS -- ragged, bandaged, tough, a battle-scarred memory of the arrogant young fanatics they once were.

A LEGEND APPEARS OVER THE ACTION:

HOLLAND
Autumn, 1944

As the LEGEND FADES AWAY the soldiers line up opposite the villagers in the town square, weapons at the ready. In the distance we continue to HEAR the SOUNDS OF FURIOUS BATTLE, and then a MAN steps out in front of the soldiers and begins to pace:

He is LEUTNANT ROLF KESSEL. Though still young, his EYES are deadened by all he has believed and seen in his short life: his gaze is beyond cold.

Near Kessel stands another man, a CATHOLIC PRIEST: FATHER LANKESTER MERRIN. He is not yet the wise old man we are familiar with; in fact, he is not yet even forty.

At Merrin's feet lies THE BODY OF A DEAD GERMAN SOLDIER, arranged on a litter.

Kessel addresses the villagers; in his voice there is a very unsettling mix of vicious threat and sardonic playfulness.

KESSEL
I am Oberleutnant Rolf Kessel of the SS Kampfgruppe 'Hohenstauffen.'And that --
(indicating the dead soldier)
-- was one of my men. We found him not long ago -- in a ditch, with a kitchen knife in his back. Not a mile from this
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: 1

KESSEL (cont'd)
place. Murdered. By one of you.
(a beat; sighs in disgust)
You peasants are all the same. France, Russia, Holland... You hear the Allied guns beyond the hills --
(gestures to the surrounding horizon)
-- and you see the German army retreating. It makes you feel hope. It makes you feel bold! It shouldn't. No one is coming to help you. Not today. Today it is only you and me. So -- who among you is responsible?

The villagers stand silent. Kessel approaches Merrin.

KESSEL
You. Priest. What is your name?

MERRIN
I am Father Merrin.

KESSEL
And these -- creatures are your parish?
(off Merrin's nod)
They confess to you, then. So -- point out the one who is responsible.

MERRIN
(earnestly)
No one here did this, Leutnant. They aren't capable of it.

KESSEL
Apparently one of them is.
(aside to Merrin)
You must help me with this.

MERRIN
But -- how?

KESSEL
I need someone. Do you understand? Surely there is one among them who beats his wife, or his children. A thief, perhaps. Or a cheat. Every town has someone it can do without. Someone whose absence would only improve things. Point him out.

MERRIN
There is no killer in that line. I know them.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: 1

KESSEL
(a beat, studying Merrin)
Yes. I believe you.

Kessel turns back to the villagers and smiles.

KESSEL
I have good news. You are all innocent. Your priest has told me so.

The villagers exchange nervous looks, nonetheless.

KESSEL
The murderer is no doubt lurking in the hills. Reveling in the conviction that he has escaped punishment. Growing brazen -- perhaps brazen enough to strike at the next group of German soldiers who are cursed enough to pass this way. You and I cannot allow that. We have a responsibility to teach this coward a lesson.
(surveying the villagers)
I am going to shoot ten of you, in the hope that we can demonstrate to this wretch the terrible responsibility he has incurred.

The villagers react with a collective jolt, while Merrin stares at Kessel in shock and disbelief.

Kessel's eyes settle on a MAN in his thirties; he approaches him.

KESSEL
Big hands. Tough. A farmer?
(the man nods)
Married? You have children?

FARMER
Two girls.

KESSEL
Excellent. We'll start with you.

Kessel pulls the man from the line, draws his pistol and then forces the man to his knees.

The villagers watch in mounting terror.

MERRIN
Stop!

1 CONTINUED: 1

Kessel pauses and turns his dead gaze to Merrin.

KESSEL
You have some objection?

MERRIN
This is unspeakable! In God's name, you cannot do this.

KESSEL
I do nothing in God's name, Priest. But of course you're right.
(he kicks the farmer away)
You choose.

Merrin gapes at him, incredulous.

MERRIN
What are you saying?

KESSEL
Well, they're your flock, Priest. You live among them, and me? I'm only passing through. So you choose.
(pointedly)
In God's name.

MERRIN
I -- I will not. This is monstrous!

KESSEL
You give me ten of them or I'll kill them all. Men, women and children.

MERRIN
(pauses desperately; then:)
Me. Shoot me.

KESSEL
(laughing)
Yes, you'd like that, wouldn't you? The good shepherd lays down his life that his flock may live.
(aside to Merrin)
It's been done, Priest...
(aloud)
You have five seconds.

MERRIN
Wait! I can't -- surely you know that!

1 CONTINUED: 1

KESSEL
(moving to the villagers)
Can't what? Pick those who will be sacrificed? History is full of priests who did little <u>else</u>!
(much harder)
You begin to irritate me, Father Merrin...

Without taking his eyes from Merrin's, Kessel reaches out and grabs the person nearest at hand. It is a TEENAGE GIRL, who scarcely has time to cry out in reaction before --

BLAM!

Kessel has PUT HIS PISTOL TO HER TEMPLE AND FIRED.

The girl slumps to the ground sickeningly, and the VILLAGERS JUMP BACK, their WEEPING and CRIES growing LOUDER. The girl's PARENTS are too terrified even to approach her body.

Merrin stares at the dead girl, stunned and speechless.

KESSEL
<u>That</u> was for making me wait, Priest. I still want <u>ten more names</u>.

Merrin stares at him, unable to find words. Then he looks at the villagers, who all stare back at him in terror and in the desperate hope that he will find some way out. But Merrin can only lower his eyes, clasp his hands painfully tight, and:

Begin to pray.

Kessel stares at him in wide-eyed amazement.

KESSEL
<u>What</u>? Are you -- are you <u>praying</u>? To <u>God</u>?!
(leaning close)
For what? A bolt of lightning?! An archangel to protect you?! Well -- go ahead and pray, Father. I'll indulge you. Because I know something, you see --

Kessel again reaches out to the line of villagers, this time grabbing a YOUNG BOY. The child's eyes go wide as Kessel holds his pistol to his head and shouts:

KESSEL
GOD IS NOT HERE TODAY, PRIEST!

Merrin tries to speak, but can only issue a choking sound.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: 1

Kessel frowns, releases the boy and then shakes his head. Finally he turns to his men.

KESSEL
Shoot them all.

The villagers start to GROAN and WAIL louder.

The soldiers step back, PREPARING TO FIRE: THEIR RIFLES BOLTS SNAP AND RATTLE.

Merrin finally utters a GASPING WORD:

MERRIN
Wait...

Kessel turns to Merrin expectantly, almost happily.

Merrin surveys his flock; they look back at him with hope that he has found another way. But Merrin only raises an arm to POINT AT ONE OF THEM.

MERRIN
Joost Harmensz...

The MAN Merrin has chosen -- a blacksmith -- stares at Merrin in disbelief.

SEVERAL SOLDIERS DRAG HARMENSZ FROM THE LINE, FORCING HIM TO HIS KNEES; THEN, AT A SIGNAL FROM KESSEL, THEY EXECUTE HIM.

A COLD WIND SUDDENLY RISES, tugging at Merrin's robes.

Kessel smiles and speaks, his VOICE now SOFT and SOOTHING:

KESSEL
Good, Father -- good. And who shall be next?

His FACE ever more tortured, Merrin points to ANOTHER VILLAGER.

We hear another SHOT; and soon, ANOTHER. And ANOTHER. And ANOTHER, as we...

FADE TO BLACK. FADE IN ON:

2 INT. OFFICE, BRITISH GOVERNMENT HOUSE - DAY. 2

Two MEN flank a window, looking out. One is a young priest, FATHER WILLIAM FRANCIS, and the other is an officer in the British Army, CAPTAIN GRANVILLE.

2 CONTINUED: 2

A LEGEND APPEARS briefly:

BRITISH EAST AFRICA
Three Years Later...

Father Francis indicates a FIGURE in the street outside the window.

FRANCIS
That's him.

Through the window, following Francis's indication to Granville, we see:

LANKESTER MERRIN APPROACHING THE BUILDING. He's dressed in dusty field kit: there's no sign of his being a priest.

Granville contemplates the advancing form.

GRANVILLE
He's Dutch, you say?

FRANCIS
Half. His mother was English.

GRANVILLE
Was she? Well, perhaps he'll be a bit more inclined to see reason, then.

FRANCIS
I don't think you'll find him lacking when it comes to reason, Captain. He wrote some of the most brilliant tracts the modern church has produced. I studied them in divinity school. We all did.

GRANVILLE
(nodding, still watching Merrin)
And what did they concern?

FRANCIS
The origins and nature of evil.

GRANVILLE
Well... the world has given him an abundance of case studies, in recent years. All the same, Father, this is rather a strange part of the world in which to find a Catholic scholar conducting an archaeological dig. What's his current standing in the church?

2 CONTINUED: 2

FRANCIS
Undecided...

CUT TO:

3 EXT. BRITISH GOVERNMENT HOUSE - DAY. 3

Merrin sits on the steps leading up to the building's veranda: waiting and staying still, two things he clearly doesn't like to do, these days -- and soon we see why:

He TAPS HIS HEAVY BOOTS IN THE DRY DIRT NERVOUSLY, MAKING A SOUND THAT IS REMINISCENT OF MARCHING. He quickly stops, but the SOUND is continued, by VILLAGERS and ANIMALS WALKING in street. Their steady steps TRIGGER the same memory of MARCHING in Merrin's mind, and we along with him HEAR a faint ECHO of JACKBOOTS AGAINST GRAVEL. This mental echo becomes all too real when:

A COMPANY OF BRITISH TROOPS MARCHES BY, a SERGEANT-MAJOR at their head. The sergeant-major BARKS OUT ORDERS, and we see Merrin growing ever more uncomfortable: he tries to casually close his eyes and cover his ears, not wanting to appear as troubled as he is: but the effort does not have the desired effect --

The MARCHING SOUND now TRANSFORMS MORE CLEARLY INTO THE CRUNCH OF JACKBOOTS AGAINST GRAVEL. The Sergeant-Major's orders, meanwhile, STEADILY CHANGE INTO GERMAN COMMANDS.

Merrin covers his ears more tightly, clearly having trouble but still not wanting to show it. He STARTS TO ROCK BACK AND FORTH SLOWLY, AND THEN HIS EYES OPEN BRIEFLY AS:

A WIND KICKS UP ON THE STREET. The wind is not unlike the one we observed in the Dutch village. Merrin clamps his eyes closed again, ever more tormented; then he STARTS AND ALMOST LEAPS UP when:

A HAND TOUCHES HIS SHOULDER: a withered, old hand, belonging to an ancient ARAB HOLY MAN who stands before Merrin, his robes wafted by the wind. He stares at Merrin in agitated desperation, and soon we make out that:

HE IS A LEPER: horribly scarred and deteriorating, half of his face little more than a living, putrescent skull. But he can speak almost clearly:

ARAB HOLY MAN
A thousand pardons, effendi. But I am told you have come from the village of Lodwar.

3 CONTINUED: 3

MERRIN
(recovering himself)
Lodwar -- yes.

ARAB HOLY MAN
And that you will return soon.

MERRIN
(indicating the building)
That depends on the gentlemen inside.
Can I help you with something?

The holy man seizes Merrin's hand with his own, which are little more than a pair of WRAPPED STUMPS, and presses something into it.

ARAB HOLY MAN
Please -- return this to my master. And beg him to have mercy on my soul!

Bewildered, Merrin looks into his hand to see HALF OR THREE QUARTERS OF A GOLD MEDALLION ON A CHAIN: not unlike a common religious talisman. As he studies the thing Merrin says:

MERRIN
But I don't know who your master --

Merrin stops when he looks up to see that the old man has VANISHED INTO THE CROWD. Looking up and down the street he can catch no glimpse of him.

Bewildered, Merrin holds the medallion up and studies it more closely:

The fragment shows A BEAUTIFUL RELIEF OF AN IDEALIZED ANGEL FLYING UPWARD. The thing appears to date from the early Middle Ages. Merrin apparently thinks little of it until:

He NOTICES WHERE THE CHAIN IS FASTENED ON THE FRAGMENT. Puzzled, he lets the medallion dangle by the chain:

THE MEDALLION REVERSES ITS POSITION, SO THAT THE ANGEL IS NOW UPSIDE DOWN -- NOT FLYING UP, BUT PLUMMETING DOWN. Yet, strangely:

The LATIN LETTERING AROUND THE IMAGE IS RIGHTSIDE UP. Merrin reads it:

MERRIN
"...in tenebrae sempiterna jactum est."

Merrin is intrigued, but he STARTS AGAIN as:

3 CONTINUED: 3

A BRITISH CORPORAL TAPS HIM ON THE SHOULDER.

CORPORAL
Sir? Captain Granville will see you now.

Merrin nods and, after looking around the street once more, heads inside.

CUT TO:

4 INT. OFFICE, BRITISH GOVERNMENT HOUSE - DAY. 4

Captain Granville now sits at his desk, smiling amiably as he carefully mixes drinks, using a traveling cocktail kit. Father Francis stands beside him.

Merrin stands in front of the desk, next to a large military map, at which he points.

MERRIN
The site is near the northern edge of Lake Rudolf, in the Turkana District. It's unquestionably early Christian -- Byzantine -- which makes for quite a mystery, given its location. My colleagues at Edinburgh University and I think it may very well be evidence that after the Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity he dispatched missionary parties to the ends of the known world. We won't know more about how or why until we get inside the thing -- and I'd only uncovered a small portion of the roof before I was -- summoned here --

GRANVILLE
(smiling)
Did you feel "summoned"? I am sorry. Drink?
(holds up a glass)

MERRIN
No. Thank you.

Granville hands a glass to Francis and stands up.

GRANVILLE
I'm sorry about interrupting your work, Father Merrin --

MERRIN
It's just Merrin. For the moment.

4 CONTINUED: 4

GRANVILLE
Oh? Do forgive me. But it's a question of your status, you see.

MERRIN
My status?

Merrin glances at Francis, and Granville catches it; he picks up a file.

GRANVILLE
Not your -- ecclesiastical status. That's none of my business. No, officially you're still listed as a "displaced person" -- a war refugee. Which complicates things, I'm afraid. I wonder, why haven't you taken steps to clear the matter up? It's your right, you know.

MERRIN
Yes, well, I've been -- busy...

GRANVILLE
(opening the file)
I've noticed. This is your seventh archeological dig since the end of the war. Yet you left all the others shortly after their major discoveries were made...

Merrin begins to squirm a bit under the scrutiny; then he nods at Francis.

MERRIN
If this is an official matter, then what's he doing here?

GRANVILLE
Father Francis? Well, for one thing he's quite an admirer of yours --

FRANCIS
(stepping in)
As are a great many of us, Father Mer--
(catching himself)
Merrin. And by a lucky coincidence, I'm about to begin missionary work in the Turkana District. I thought perhaps we could help to each other. You know something of the people --

MERRIN
I'd prefer not. Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

FRANCIS
(an uneasy smile)
This is -- a little awkward, I'm afraid. You see, if this site is what you claim, it will obviously be of enormous significance to the Church. Cardinal Jenkins in Nairobi is somewhat -- concerned about the exploration being conducted by a priest who has renounced his vows --

MERRIN
(uneasily but quickly)
I haven't renounced them. I've been granted a sabbatical from my duties. For personal -- reflection...

FRANCIS
A sabbatical that shortly comes up for review. It's been quite a while.

MERRIN
(moving for the door)
Perhaps I should take this up with the Governor's office.

GRANVILLE
They'd only send you back to me, I'm afraid. Turkana is subject to the Closed District Ordinance -- all matters regarding its administration now fall under military jurisdiction. Including travel visas for refugees.
(a beat; gently)
Why don't you have a seat, Merrin?

Resigned, Merrin sits at a chair in front of the desk.

GRANVILLE
You're sure you won't have that drink? Best thing for you, in this climate.

Merrin reluctantly takes the glass that Granville offers.

GRANVILLE
You see, I've been prevailed upon by the Cardinal's representatives to recognize their interest in this site. It's really quite reasonable -- they only want to be sure that its religious aspects are given proper consideration. Part of Father Francis's job will be to see to that. Being as you're -- on sabbatical...

4 CONTINUED: 4

MERRIN
But -- forgive me, Father, it's just that I really don't need any assistance --

FRANCIS
No one is quesitoning your competence, Merrin.

GRANVILLE
Certainly not. But you are not the sole person with an interest, here. I've contacted your sponsors in Edinburgh, and they have no objection. If you agree as well, I can process your visa immediately.
(holding up his glass, smiling)
We all must make our little deals with the Devil, Merrin...

Merrin somewhat sullenly sips his drink.

DISSOLVE TO:

5 EXT. RIFT VALLEY, TURKANA DISTRICT - DAY. 5

Acacia trees and scrub brush dot the landscape. A vast LAKE lies to one side of the vista. MOUNTAINS border the other.

TWO VEHICLES rumble along a dusty road, kicking up great clouds. One is a surplus Land Rover, its military markings crudely painted out; the other is an ancient truck.

Merrin drives the Land Rover, his guide, CHUMA, beside him. Francis sits behind them, bouncing uncomfortably. He stares at:

A GROUP OF NAKED TURKANA TRIBESMEN in the fields ahead. They surround a BULL THAT IS TIES TO A STAKE. Its flanks are ritually painted. As the jeep approaches Francis winces when:

Following the directions of ONE CEREMONIOUSLY DRESSED ELDER, THE OTHER TRIBESMEN BEGIN TO STAB THE BULL WITH BRIGHTLY DECORATED SPEARS. The bull LOWS in pain, whipping its head from attacker to attacker wildly.

FRANCIS
Why in God's name are they tormenting that animal?

CHUMA
It is a sacrifice -- the favorite wife of our chief elder, Sebituana --

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

Chuma indicates the elaborately dressed ELDER in the field who is directing the others.

CHUMA
-- will soon give birth. Sebituana does not yet have an heir. So we make sacrifices in the hope that our gods will provide one.
(off Francis's continued frown)
It is a necessary thing.

FRANCIS
Cruelty is never necessary, Chuma.

CHUMA
You think we are savages?

FRANCIS
No. I think you are good people who will wander in confusion until you discover the light of our Savior.

MERRIN
There's nothing confused about that ceremony, Father. The men are weakening the animal so that one of them can approach it.

We see the bull losing power, its FRONT LEGS BUCKLING; then, suddenly, one of the TRIBESMEN -- JOMO, tall and impressive -- LEAPS ONTO THE BACK OF ITS NECK AND DRAWS A RAZOR-SHARP MACHETE ACROSS ITS THROAT. Two other ELDERS, meanwhile, hold a small EARTHENWARE TROUGH UNDER THE ANIMAL'S THROAT, CATCHING THE STREAMING BLOOD.

MERRIN
Blood is a staple of these peoples' diet. And the animal they select for the ritual is generally inferior in some way -- unsuitable for breeding. So the ceremony serves several purposes -- they appease their gods, provide sustenance for the tribe and strengthen their herds.

Francis absorbs all this, still horrified by what he's watching but now clearly morally confused. Merrin studies him with a small smile.

MERRIN
Tell me, Father -- where were you during the war?

5 CONTINUED: 5

FRANCIS
(self-consciously)
The war? Why, I -- I was at divinity school. I meant to become an army chaplain, but the end came too soon.

MERRIN
(a humorless chuckle)
"Too soon..."

Merrin's attitude continues to soften as he realizes the inexperience and naivete of the younger Francis; Francis, for his part, remains anxious to establish a connection to Merrin.

FRANCIS
I -- didn't mean it to sound like that. As I think you realize, Merrin. You know, Captain Granville was right about my admiring your work -- your treatises were brilliant, really.

MERRIN
They were foolish speculation, Father. What I've learned about evil since those days... can't be put on paper...
(rallying, another smile)
And those sorts of texts certainly won't help you much out here. I'd advise a less intellectual approach, if you want to succeed with these people...

Francis smiles back, a bit uncomfortably, as the vehicles continue on their way through the valley.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. VILLAGE OF LODWAR, MAIN SQUARE - DAY. 6

A small, sleepy town built during the colonial period. The MAIN STREET AND SQUARE consist of humble brick and plaster buildings.

A FEW WHITE PEOPLE reside here; but they are scarce, as this is the edge of their civilization.

A TURKANA VILLAGE is situated nearby: MUD AND THATCH HUTS SURROUNDED BY CRUDE CORRALS. TURKANA TRIBESMEN herd GOATS along the main street in Lodwar. THEIR CHILDREN FOLLOW THEM, LAUGHING AND CRYING OUT IN EXCITEMENT AS:

MERRIN'S CONVOY RUMBLES INTO TOWN. The CHILDREN swarm around the jeep and truck.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: 6

Nearby, a WOMAN steps from a doorway. She dressed in a doctor's field kit, and is wiping water from her hands and sweat from her brow with a towel: she is RACHEL LESZNO. Through the doorway behind her we see:

Several NEATLY MADE COTS TENTED WITH MOSQUITO NETTING, some bearing PATIENTS, as well as WHITE ENAMELED TABLES AND CABINETS.

As Merrin drives by in the jeep Rachel waves lightly to him; but her eyes betray more than a light interest. Merrin returns both the wave and the look in kind.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. ANOTHER STREET IN LODWAR - DAY. 7

Merrin pulls up in front of a modest building that has SMALL COTTAGES sprinkled around it. A weathered SIGN says "HOTEL".

Francis climbs stiffly from the truck, HIS SMALL, FAIRLY NEW SUITCASE -- WHICH WE WILL SEE AGAIN -- IN HAND.

EMEKWI, a large AFRICAN MAN dressed in WESTERN CLOTHES, emerges from the hotel SMILING, followed by two BOYS, one about twelve, the other a bit younger: they are HIS SONS, JAMES and JOSEPH.

EMEKWI
Habari, Lankester. It is good to have you back -- your rooms are prepared.

Merrin shakes Emekwi's hand and then gestures toward Francis.

MERRIN
We'll need more, Emekwi. This is Father Francis.

EMEKWI
(bowing to Francis respectfully)
You are a friend of Lankester's, Father?

FRANCIS
I hope so. But I've actually come to open a missionary school. Is this your hotel?

EMEKWI
The finest establishment in Lodwar!

7 CONTINUED: 7

MERRIN
The only establishment in Lodwar. Emekwi is a Christian, Father -- perhaps he'll be willing to help you.

EMEKWI
In any way I can. James! Joseph!
(his sons step forward)
These are my sons, Father -- they shall be your first pupils, if you will have them.

FRANCIS
Splendid. Thank you, Emekwi.

EMEKWI
(to his sons)
Take the Father's bags -- and be thankful he has come!
(as the boys comply)
He will teach you to read and write English -- and to calculate numbers!
(following them in)
So that someday you can be of real assistance to your overburdened father!

FRANCIS
(smiling as they go; to Merrin)
Well, then -- how far are we from the site?

Merrin turns toward the HILLS BEYOND THE TOWN AND POINTS AT THEM.

MERRIN
It's up there...

CUT TO:

8 EXT. THE MOUTH OF A CAVE IN THE HILLS - DAY. 8

Merrin, Chuma and several other DIGGERS are carefully at work inside the cave, exposing:

THE UPPER CORNER OF A BURIED STRUCTURE: we can see an eave of the ROOF, and an upper portion of one WALL. It appears to be ROMAN, ALTHOUGH SLIGHTLY MORE EXOTIC.

Francis stands to one side, watching carefully.

FRANCIS
How old do you think it is?

8 CONTINUED:

MERRIN
(as he works)
That's where the mystery begins, Father. The architecture, as I've told you, seems to date to the fifth century. The Byzantine Empire had long since adopted Christianity as the state religion, and were doing whatever they could to spread the faith -- but there's never been any suggestion that they got this far south. And even if they did, look at the elaborate design of the structure -- it must have had great significance.

FRANCIS
(looking closer)
Are those -- are those individually quarried stones?

MERRIN
Yes.

FRANCIS
Then it's quite unlike the structures in Ethiopia -- the ones that were carved out of surrounding rock.

Merrin is surprised -- and a bit pleased.

MERRIN
Indeed -- but, paradoxically, this example is much earlier than those.

FRANCIS
Well, then -- what was it, do you think?

MERRIN
Before we start speculating on that, consider this --
(pointing to the wall)
There is virtually no erosion on these stones.

FRANCIS
(getting it; unnerved)
You can't mean...

MERRIN
Yes. It was deliberately buried. Right after it was built.

8 CONTINUED: 8

FRANCIS
But -- that doesn't make sense. Craftsmen and missionaries travel beyond the limits of the known world and build something this elaborate, this beautiful -- only to bury it? Why, Merrin?

Merrin turns to Chuma and nods, a bit apprehensively. Chuma turns to the diggers and begins issuing instructions.

The diggers fan out across the mouth of the cave, and start to gingerly press their tools into the surrounding soil. WE PULL BACK FROM THE SCENE AND FIND:

THAT WE ARE WATCHING FROM THE POV OF A TURKANA HERDER, WHO STANDS ON A NEARBY HILLTOP. MOVING IN CLOSER we see that the man is JOMO, the herdsman we earlier saw kill the sacrificial bull. His expression is impassive, strong but not threatening, and he LEANS ON A TALL SPEAR LIKE THOSE WITH WHICH WE SAW THE ELDERS WOUND THE STEER.

CUT TO:

9 EXT. OUTSIDE EMEKWI'S HOTEL - DAY. 9

Francis and Emekwi approach one of the SMALL OUTBUILDINGS AROUND THE HOTEL.

FRANCIS
I can't thank you enough for your generosity, Emekwi.

EMEKWI
Please, Father -- the room goes largely unused, and besides, it is nothing more than our Lord and Savior would expect.

FRANCIS
If only others of our faith would follow your example. But of course you shall have the room back, since we must eventually build a proper school.

EMEKWI
(uneasily)
Please do not think me a doubting Thomas, Father, but --

Emekwi OPENS THE DOOR OF THE BUILDING and they ENTER.

CUT TO:

10 INT. THE SMALL BUILDING BY THE HOTEL - DAY. 10

Francis and Emekwi enter to find:

A LARGE CHAKLKBOARD AND SEVERAL ROWS OF TABLES AND BENCHES -- AT WHICH SIT ONLY EMEKWI'S TWO SONS.

EMEKWI
We may not need that new school right away...

FRANCIS
Well... it's a beginning...

CUT TO:

11 EXT. THE CAVE AND RUINS - DAY. 11

A CANVAS SHELTER has been pitched outside the cave. A CANVAS BUCKET hangs within, from which Chuma drinks thirstily.

Merrin emerges from the cave and sets his shovel down, sweating. Chuma indicates the bucket.

CHUMA
Drink, Merrin. It is hot today.

Merrin nods, approaches the bucket and drinks; then he turns when he catches sight of something:

Under some scrub bushes, a couple of hundred feet from the camp, crouches A YOUNG BOY, PERHAPS TWELVE OR THIRTEEN. HE CARRIES A CRUTCH AND HIS STANCE, EVEN CROUCHING, IS BADLY TWISTED.

MERRIN
(whispering)
Chuma...
(a nod as Chuma turns)
Our friend is back...

CHUMA
(seeing the boy)
Ah. Cheche. Perhaps he wants food. The villagers will give him nothing.

MERRIN
I'll see if I can get him to come in...

Merrin starts to move out toward the boy, very gingerly. Then we see:

11 CONTINUED: 11

A CLOSE SHOT OF CHECHE. He is TERRIBLY DISFIGURED: in addition to a BADLY TWISTED RIGHT LEG, he has a WITHERED ARM AND SCARS COVERING HIS SKIN AT VARIOUS POINTS.

Cheche PULLS BACK INSTINCTIVELY as Merrin approaches.

Merrin continues his careful advance; but then he TURNS when he HEARS:

AN APPROACHING VEHICLE: it's A SMALL, ANCIENT FLATBED TRUCK, WITH CANVAS TENTING OVER THE BED AND A BADLY FADED RED CROSS ON THE DOOR.

Rachel is driving it. She waves to Merrin and Chuma, pulls up near them and then gets out. Both Merrin and Chuma approach and smile at her; but Merrin's look is the more intrigued.

RACHEL
(a European accent)
Well... you're not wasting any time. The Holy Fathers must be excited -- but where is your new partner?

MERRIN
Father Francis? In the village, teaching. What brings you up, Rachel?

RACHEL
I was attempting to convince Sebituana to let me examine his wife -- I think there may be complications with her pregnancy. But he wants no part of Western medicine. So, rather than waste the trip...
(wiping her brow)
My God, it's even hotter up here than in the village.

MERRIN
There's water in the tent. Please.

Merrin indicates the way, and as they walk toward the tent he looks back toward the spot where Cheche was hiding: but THE BOY HAS VANISHED. Merrin sighs and follows Rachel into the tent as Chuma returns to work.

MERRIN
Rachel, what do you know about that little crippled boy -- Cheche, Chuma says his name is. I've seen him several times since I came here, but he won't let me approach him.

11 CONTINUED: 11

RACHEL
(rolling up her sleeves)
He won't let anyone approach him -- I nearly had to sedate him once, to treat a rather savage blow he took from one of the other children.

MERRIN
(nodding)
The villagers hate him, Chuma tells me.

RACHEL
(drinking and washing)
I'm afraid so.

MERRIN
But why?

RACHEL
His mother was raped by several British soldiers, and when she became pregnant she was so ashamed that she tried to tear the child out of her womb with a stick -- hence most of his disfigurement. The birth, when it came, was difficult, and the mother died. For all these reasons the villagers view Cheche as cursed. I do what I can for him, and so does Emekwi. But it isn't enough. He needs sustained treatment. Since he seems to have taken an interest in you, perhaps he'll let you bring him in --

As Rachel rolls her sleeves back down she looks up to find Merrin STARING AT HER FOREARM FOR AN INSTANT:

On it is TATOOED A NUMBER.

RACHEL
(a beat)
You always look, Merrin. But you've never asked. Why?

MERRIN
I'm sorry. I didn't think it was any of my --

RACHEL
Business?
(a sigh)
The world didn't think it was any of their business -- that's how it happened.
(coming closer to him)
(MORE)

11 CONTINUED: 11

RACHEL (cont'd)
If you have questions you should ask. But not --
(moving away)
-- now. I have patients to check on. Why don't I cook you dinner?

MERRIN
I'm -- not sure --

RACHEL
(cheerfully)
You know, your friend Father Francis has told me a few things about you that you've neglected to mention during your time here.
(a beat)
So you see, I have questions, too. Nine o'clock? Too warm any earlier.

MERRIN
All right.

RACHEL
Try to pry some cold beer out of Emekwi. It's the only thing I get really homesick for...

Rachel heads for her truck and drives off, Merrin watching her go. When he turns to head back inside:

He sees that Cheche has reappeared.

Fetching a cup of water, Merrin walks slowly toward the boy, never looking directly at him. He gets about halfway to him before he hears Chuma call out:

CHUMA
Merrin! Quickly, come!

Merrin somewhat reluctantly sets the cup of water down, and then runs back to the mouth of the cave.

CUT TO:

12 INT. THE CAVE - DAY. 12

THE ROOF OF THE BURIED STRUCTURE HAS NOW BEEN MOSTLY EXPOSED, AND THE SITE IS COVERED BY A STRING GRID.

THE DIGGERS stand in a TRENCH SURROUNDING THE STRUCTURE:

THE ROOF IS IN THE SHAPE OF A CROSS. AT THE CRUX OF IT IS CARVED A LARGE SHIELD-SHAPED FORMATION;

12 CONTINUED: 12

THE WORKERS ARE BRUSHING DUST AND DIRT FROM IT TO REVEAL:

A CARVED RELIEF DEPICTING A SCENE OF ACTION: TWO BODIES IN MOTION.

Excited, Merrin quickly fetches a CAMERA and TRIPOD. As he focuses it on the shield he studies the relief more closely:

IT SHOWS A RESPLENDENT ANGEL WITH A SWORD HELD HIGH; AND BENEATH THIS FIGURE, ANOTHER ANGEL.

CHUMA
What is it, Merrin? Do you understand the meaning?

MERRIN
I -- I believe so...

Merrin leaves the camera and approaches the relief. He stares at it as his men clean it further and the SECOND ANGEL becomes MORE DISTINCT:

THE FIGURE IS FALLING.

With a sudden RUSH OF RECOGNITION, MERRIN SHOVES A HAND INTO HIS POCKET AND PULLS OUT THE FRAGMENT OF THE MEDALLION HE WAS GIVEN: HE HOLDS IT UP FOR COMPARISON AND FINDS:

THAT THE IMAGE ON THE MEDALLION AND THE FALLING ANGEL ON THE SHIELD CLOSELY RESEMBLE EACH OTHER.

MERRIN
"In tenebrae sempiterna jactum est -- "
"cast into everlasting darkness..."
Lucifer...
(looking at the first angel)
St. Michael -- the House of St. Michael!
Chuma!

CHUMA
Yes, the house of St. Michael -- but is that good?

MERRIN
It is very good, Chuma -- very good!

Chuma relates this news to the diggers in their language, prompting them to CHEER. Merrin smiles at their satisfaction, but then:

12 CONTINUED: 12

He REMEMBERS THE MEDALLION, AND CASTS A VERY UNCERTAIN, BEWILDERED LOOK DOWN AT IT.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. THE CAVE MOUTH - THAT EVENING. 13

Merrin and the other workers emerge, exhausted and loading onto the truck. Merrin thinks of something.

MERRIN
Just a minute, Chuma --

He runs over to where he left the water cup for Cheche -- but the cup is gone. Glancing around, Merrin sees it catching the LIGHT OF THE SUNSET under Cheche's bush. He walks over, bends down and retrieves it with a smile. The smile disappears, however, when he SUDDENLY HEARS:

WHAT COULD BE THE HOWLS, CRIES AND LAUGHTER OF A HUNDRED HUMAN LUNATICS. Spinning around, Merrin sees:

A DOZEN OR SO HYAENAS, PROWLING THE AREA NEARBY AND EYEING HIM. They begin to CIRCLE IN FEROCIOUS AGITATION.

ONE HYAENA IN PARTICULAR KEEPS ITS EYES LOCKED ON MERRIN: THEIR COLD VIOLENCE, MATCHED WITH THE ALMOST MOCKING SMILE OF THE MOUTH, SEEMS TO AFFECT MERRIN DEEPLY. He stands transfixed, until:

GUNSHOTS RING OUT. Chuma enters the scene, FIRING INTO THE AIR. The hyaenas disperse into the dusk.

CHUMA
They are early this year -- two of the cattle have been taken already...

MERRIN
(a deep breath)
Thank you, Chuma.

CHUMA
(a nod and a smile)
I must keep you safe for the lady doctor...

Merrin attempts to ignore this as they head back for the truck.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. EMEKWI'S HOTEL - NIGHT. 14

Merrin emerges, bearing a sack of cold, bottled beers. He heads off down the largely deserted street, HIS FEET MAKING SHUFFLING SOUNDS IN THE DUSTY ROADWAY. As he hears these SOUNDS, his mind once again begins to play with his senses, and ALONG WITH HIM WE HEAR:

MARCHING AGAIN: very faint, but enough to bring a look of familiar discomfort to Merrin's features. He puts a hand to his head as he keeps walking, then for an instant CLOSES HIS EYES. HE COMES TO A RAPID HALT -- AS DO THE SOUNDS -- WHEN A HAND TOUCHES HIM:

He opens his eyes, startled to see a RAGGED EUROPEAN MAN GESTURING AT HIM WITH A BATTERED CIGARETTE:

EUROPEAN MAN
A match -- you have a match?

Gathering his wits, Merrin nods and searches for a match in his pocket. A WIND SUDDENLY KICKS UP, and the European man, holding up a battered cigarette, backs into a nearby doorway. Merrin follows, then STRIKES A MATCH. IT GOES OUT, and he fumbles to light another. As he does the European man speaks again: but THIS TIME HIS VOICE IS DIFFERENT -- IT IS A VOICE WE'VE HEARD BEFORE, SPEAKING WITH A GERMAN ACCENT:

OLD MAN
Still can't bring any light into the world, eh, Priest?

In desperation, Merrin FINALLY STRIKES THE MATCH:

AND FOR AN INSTANT THE EUROPEAN MAN'S FACE IS THAT OF LEUTNANT ROLF KESSEL. He is smiling sardonically, just as he did in Holland.

Merrin STUMBLES BACK INTO THE STREET, THE MATCH GOING OUT. Then he pushes himself forward and STRIKES ANOTHER:

BUT THE EUROPEAN MAN IS HIMSELF AGAIN. He looks confused at Merrin's behavior, but lights his cigarette quickly before rushing away.

Merrin, for his part, slowly turns and keeps walking down the windswept street. Then, above the SOUND OF THE WIND, HE HEARS:

MOANING. Thinking that it, too, is only in his head he automatically STOPS, CLOSES HIS EYES AND AGAIN TOUCHES HIS TEMPLE. But then he opens his eyes again:

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: 14

THE SOUND IS REAL. When Merrin turns he sees that IT IS COMING FROM A NEARBY DOORWAY. He moves closer to see:

THE BOY CHECHE, SLEEPING FITFULLY, TRYING TO PULL HIS RAGS AROUND HIMSELF AGAINST THE WIND. Cheche's face is feverish, and there are OPEN SORES at various points on his body.

His nightmares now disspelled, Merrin shakes his head and, still gripping the sack of bottles, slings his arms under the boy and picks him up.

Cheche wakes momentarily with a start, clearly expecting an attack of some kind; but when he sees it's Merrin he allows himself to settle down a bit, and consents to be carried.

CUT TO:

15 EXT. RACHEL'S HOSPITAL - NIGHT. 15

Merrin reaches the entrance, Cheche having fallen back into a feverish slumber. Merrin kicks at the closed door, and Rachel soon opens it, surprised.

MERRIN
I -- brought a friend. I didn't think you'd mind...

CUT TO:

16 INT. RACHEL'S HOSPITAL - LATER THAT NIGHT. 16

Cheche lies in one of the beds, Merrin and Rachel on either side of it. Rachel is treating the boy, who is now bandaged and resting much more comfortably.

RACHEL
The sores were badly infected -- some even with maggots. But I've cleaned and dressed them, and I don't think there's any danger there. The fever, too, should improve. The leg and arm are a different matter. They must give him terrible pain, and have caused significant scoliosis.

MERRIN
There's nothing you can do?

RACHEL
Not for the arm. The leg I could, theoretically, rebreak and set properly. But I don't think he'd ever allow it -- not given the way he's been treated.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: 16

RACHEL (cont'd)
(a hand to Cheche's face)
The poor creature...

MERRIN
Well -- he can rest here for the night, at any rate.

RACHEL
And for as long after that as he likes. But I've a feeling he'll be off as soon as he wakes.
(looking at Merrin)
Though he trusted you enough to let you bring him here. That's unusual. You must have a gift. Come, let's eat...

CUT TO:

17 INT. BACK ROOM OF RACHEL'S HOSPITAL - LATER. 17

Rachel and Merrin have finished eating at a makeshift dining table, and are drinking the last of the beer.

MERRIN
And it was your own neighbors who revealed the hiding place?

RACHEL
(a grim nod)
People I had known all my life...
(a beat; very ambiguous)
There's -- not a great deal more to tell, after that. It was a pure question of survival. I did -- what I had to... You know, people talk in such terms a great deal -- about how they're trying to survive, how they don't know how they'll survive some setback. But when your life truly becomes a question of simple physical survival -- you realize how naive such talk really is. And what you yourself are capable of...
(a beat)
As, I suppose, you know.
(off Merrin's silence)
I'm sorry -- please don't feel --

MERRIN
They were members of my parish.

RACHEL
(a beat)
The ones who were shot?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

MERRIN
(nodding)
They were executed. By the Germans. Because of me -- I chose them.

RACHEL
You chose...?

MERRIN
To save the rest. You'll tell me that's terrible, but defensible, eh? Perhaps even noble, in some hellish way. After all, I did save the others -- the Germans would have shot them all. I've told myself the same things. Time and again... And they're true. It's just that they don't matter.
(pausing)
Because when I prayed to God for help -- for guidance -- for anything -- He was silent. His silence condemned me, and I condemned ten innocent people to die -- people who, like me, believed in Him and prayed to Him -- and whose prayers, like mine, went unanswered.

Rachel gently reaches out and touches his hand.

RACHEL
I'm sorry...

MERRIN
I was told that God was not there that day. I haven't seen him anywhere since.

RACHEL
And you've traveled to all these places, these digs of yours, in the hopes of -- what? Catching a glimpse? You think this Shrine of St. Michael or whatever it is can mend your faith?

MERRIN
Why do you sound so skeptical?

RACHEL
Because you're a fool, Merrin.
(a beat)
I'm sorry. You can see why I don't get many dinner guests. But you talk about God not being there that day -- I'll tell you, when I was in Buchenwald, I saw things every day that could have made me
(MORE)

17 CONTINUED: 17

RACHEL (cont'd)
doubt the existence of God. But they only strengthened my faith.

MERRIN
Why? How?

RACHEL
Because sometimes, I think, the best view of God is from Hell.
(getting up)
Here...

Rachel moves to the door and points into the hospital ward at Cheche's bed.

RACHEL
That child you brought in. His own mother tried to kill him before he was born. He's had no one, and the superstitions of these people mean that he is tormented every minute of his life. And then one day you come into this place. And somehow that child knows that you are the one he's been waiting for. What is that but faith? And what is it in you that could inspire such faith?

MERRIN
But -- anyone would have --

RACHEL
Wrong. Almost no one here would have. And even those who would, like Emekwi or me, couldn't. You could. That is God. In you.

MERRIN
No.

RACHEL
You know what I think? I think you roam the world looking for evidence of God in the past -- because you're too angry to accept the evidence that's in front of your face.

MERRIN
(searching for arguments)
Look, that boy could have chosen me for any number of reasons --

RACHEL
(a hand to his shoulder)
He chose you because you're a good man.
(MORE)

17 CONTINUED: 17

RACHEL (cont'd)
Stop arguing with God, Merrin. You're losing.

CUT TO:

18 EXT. THE CAVE DIG - DAY. 18

Francis, Merrin and Chuma enter the site.

CUT TO:

19 INT. THE CAVE - DAY. 19

Inside, Merrin indicates the work to Francis:

THE CHURCH HAS NOW BEEN UNCOVERED ALMOST TO ITS FOUNDATIONS, the TRENCH around it having reached a depth of some thirty feet.

FRANCIS
My God -- Merrin, it's magnificent!

MERRIN
(smiling)
Be sure to mention that in your report...

Merrin hands Francis a FLASHLIGHT, and then the three men climb down the earthen steps of the trench, Merrin carrying his CAMERA.

THEY REACH THE MASSIVE DOORS TO THE CHURCH, and Merrin takes hold of one gigantic door handle. The HINGES OF THE DOOR GROAN LOUDLY AS HE PULLS IT OPEN.

THERE IS ONLY DARKNESS INSIDE, WHICH SWALLOWS UP EVEN THE BEAM OF FRANCIS'S WEAK FLASHLIGHT.

MERRIN
Chuma. Bring a torch...

CUT TO:

20 INT. THE CHURCH - A MOMENT LATER. 20

Merrin, Francis and then Chuma step inside. Their faces go wide with awe, and then we, along with them, SEE:

RELIGIOUS MOSAICS COVERING THE WALLS: obviously Byzantine, as well as very elaborate and beautiful, they depict:

SCENES OF ANGELS BATTLING OTHER ANGELS: THESE PROCEED ON TO SCENES OF ANGELS CASTING OTHER ANGELS OUT OF HEAVEN, AND THEN THE SECOND GROUP OF ANGELS BECOMING DEMONS.

20 CONTINUED: 20

FRANCIS
The war in Heaven...

MERRIN
(nodding)
The style is consistent with the architecture: early Byzantine.

The two men continue to follow the tale told in the reliefs, until they reach the end, which depicts:

SATAN RULING OVER HIS DEMONS IN HELL, WITH A LARGER RELIEF OF THE SAME IMAGE OF ST. MICHAEL WE'VE SEEN BEFORE ABOVE THEM, LOOKING VERY TRIUMPHANT. All the scenes SHIMMER with the usual brightness of Byzantine artwork: but then Francis, who is taking a SIP FROM A CANTEEN, MOVES HIS FLASHLIGHT AND NOTICES SOMETHING THAT GIVES HIM SUCH A SHOCK HE DROPS THE WATER:

FRANCIS
Good lord, Merrin. Look...

Following the BEAM OF FRANCIS'S LIGHT, Merrin SEES that:

IT IS BEING REFLECTED AND REFRACTED BY DOZENS OF TRANSLUSCENT SPOTS IN THE ARTWORK.

FRANCIS
Are they -- gems?

MERRIN
They are indeed. Inlaid into the reliefs. See there? In the angels' wings, those look like diamonds. And the demons' skin and tongues -- rubies and emeralds. The wealth here is almost unimaginable --

Merrin STOPS WHEN HE HEARS SOMETHING.

FRANCIS
What's wrong?

MERRIN
Sshh...

Francis follows the instruction, as does Chuma; and after a few seconds they, too, HEAR THE SOUND:

THE FAINT ECHO OF DRIPPING WATER.

FRANCIS
A spring?

20 CONTINUED: 20

CHUMA
Not in these caves, Father.

Merrin glances AROUND AND THEN DOWN: HE SEES THE WATER THAT HAS SPILLED FROM FRANCIS'S DROPPED CANTEEN, WHICH IS VANISHING INTO THE JOINT BETWEEN TWO STONE FLOOR PANELS.

MERRIN
Chuma -- the torch...

Merrin leans down with the flaming light, studying the scene; then he takes the canteen and POURS SOME MORE WATER ONTO THE APPARENTLY UNDAMAGED LINE BETWEEN THE PANELS:

THE WATER DISAPPEARS, TO THE SOUND OF MORE ECHOED TRICKLING.

Merrin looks up with tightly contained excitement at Chuma.

MERRIN
Bring a prybar, Chuma -- quickly, please...

CUT TO:

21 INT. BENEATH THE CHURCH FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER. 21

BLACKNESS IS SUDDENLY ILLUMINATED AS A TRAP DOOR IS THROWN OPEN. We see Merrin, prybar in hand, HEAVING THE HEAVY STONE DOOR UP with Francis's and Chuma's help.

All three gaze down with trepidation.

FRANCIS
A cave?

MERRIN
(shaking his head)
I don't think so...

We FOLLOW THE THREE DOWN SOME CRUDE STONE STEPS. At the bottom they come to a halt when they find:

ANOTHER DOOR. But this one is MUCH DIFFERENT: THE STONE IS OLDER, AND THE DESIGNS ON IT ARE MUCH MORE PRIMITIVE.

Merrin PULLS THE DOOR OPEN.

CUT TO:

22 INT. THE CHAMBER BENEATH THE CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER. 22

TORCHLIGHT sweeps into:

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: 22

AN ANCIENT CHAMBER. Its every detail suggests pagan prehistory: it is terrifying, and not simply because of its age:

The CARVED WALLS depict scenes of CARNAL LUST AND NIGHTMARISH CRUELTY, all being perpetrated by DEMONS and DEMON-HEADED HUMANS against terrified HUMAN VICTIMS, INCLUDING CHILDREN;

Attached to the walls are what we can clearly recognize as ancient, crude MANACLES and RESTRAINING ROPES;

On several STONE TABLES sit various SHARP BRONZE AND IRON IMPLEMENTS, whose uses one can only guess at;

And the centerpiece of it all, against the farthest wall, is a LARGE STONE ALTAR THAT BEARS A CHILLING RESEMBLANCE TO A MODERN POST-MORTEM TABLE: it is contoured for a human body, and there are channels to collect blood and fluids that lead to a draining spout. Beneath the spout on the stone floor is an EARTHENWARE JUG that none of three newcomers has any desire to look into.

Above the altar are three CARVED STONE IMAGES: TWO DEMONS WITH IDEALIZED NAKED HUMAN BODIES, ONE MALE, ONE FEMALE; and, between them, A THIRD, LARGER IDEALIZED HUMAN MALE FORM THAT HAS AN ARM AROUND THE WAIST OF EACH OF THE OTHER TWO:

YET WE CANNOT SEE THE FACE OF THIS CENTRAL FIGURE: IT HAS BEEN STRUCK OFF.

The three men gaze about them in horrified fascination.

FRANCIS
What in the name of Heaven is this place?

MERRIN
A temple of some kind.

FRANCIS
What bestial idol could inspire such a room?

Merrin steps up to the altar, gazing at the BLANK STONE on the head of the central figure above it.

MERRIN
It's dedicated to <u>him</u>, I'd say. Some ancient pagan god of these parts. Chuma?

CHUMA
I have never seen anything like it, Merrin. I would remember.

22 CONTINUED: 22

MERRIN
Well... Apparently the church was built over it. And they likely used St. Michael as a patron symbol to further emphasize to Chuma's ancestors that their many gods had no power before the One.
(a beat)
This is a remarkable find, Father Francis.

FRANCIS
(joining him at the altar)
And a terrible one.
(pointing)
Those are bloodstains, clearly. They sacrified people here.

MERRIN
Indeed. Almost like a scene out of the Inquisition, isn't it?
(off Francis's indignant look)
All right, Father, I'm sorry. Well -- we'd better seal this back up until we've finished upstairs.

Merrin is deeply satisfied, in a way we haven't seen before.

MERRIN
We've got weeks of work ahead of us...

CUT TO:

23 INT. RACHEL'S HOSPITAL - MORNING. 23

Rachel is taking worn, dirty but secure bandages off of Cheche, who sits on an examination table. He winces a little as the medical tape is removed, but each time it is he is also clearly relieved by the fact that his wounds and sores are very much better.

RACHEL
There -- there -- yes, you're a very brave boy, Cheche -- and see? Much better. Now this one...

Cheche understands few of the words, but the soothing tone and general message are clear, and he appreciates it, his trust in Rachel having grown immensely.

She gets the last bandage off.

RACHEL
There. And so we're finished. Better, eh?

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: 23

Rachel indicates the sores, and SPEAKS IN SERVICEABLE TURKANA (we see SUBTITLES):

RACHEL
[Better?] Better?

CHECHE
Beh - der...

RACHEL
Yes. Better.

Rachel smiles at him, and for the first time he smiles back, just a little.

RACHEL
Well -- Merrin was right about you, Cheche. I thought you'd run away, but you've been a very good patient. I'll have to tell him.

CHECHE
Baba? Baba come?

RACHEL
Hmm? "Baba...?" Oh, you mean father.

CHECHE
(nodding eagerly)
Baba.

RACHEL
No, no, Cheche, that's Father Francis, Merrin isn't --
(another smile)
But perhaps, to you...Yes, Baba will come here soon. After sundown --

Rachel gestures outside and again speaks in Turkana (we again see SUBTITLES):

RACHEL
[He will come after the sun sets.]

Cheche looks pleased and fully prepared to wait, which gives Rachel an idea.

RACHEL
Cheche -- if Baba and I -- if we could make your leg better --
(indicating the leg, speaking in Turkana again)
(MORE)

23 CONTINUED: 23

RACHEL (cont'd)
[-- if we could make this better --]
would you want that?

Again, Cheche has little trouble following the idea: he nods eagerly.

RACHEL
Good -- good. Well, we'll have a lot of exciting news for Baba, won't we?

DISSOLVE TO:

24 EXT. THE CAVE - SUNSET. 24

Merrin and Francis climb up and out of the dig, exhausted, and head for the tent and water.

FRANCIS
Merrin, I've waited two days, I must inform Cardinal Jenkins --

MERRIN
But when word gets out about what's in there, we increase the risk of violation and looting exponentially --

FRANCIS
Which is why I must inform Captain Granville, as well, and ask that he send a detachment of guards.

MERRIN
Why -- because the average British soldier has always proved so trustworthy in situations like this? Have you been to the British Museum, Father?

FRANCIS
Merrin, please, you are not the only concerned, responsible person involved in this --

Francis is interrupted when:

A GROUP OF TURKANA WORKERS PASS BY THE TENT, TALKING LOUDLY. They have their tools and other effects with them: they are clearly quitting.

Merrin looks very concerned; a look that deepens when Chuma runs into the tent.

MERRIN
Chuma -- what's happening, why are the men leaving?

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: 24

CHUMA
They say they will not work here anymore.

FRANCIS
What? Nonsense, they're being paid --

Merrin touches Francis's arm, silencing him.

KIONGOZI
You must come. Now.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. THE HILL BY THE NEARBY PASTURE - SUNSET. 25

Merrin, Francis and Chuma rush up from the dig. They find the chief elder, Sebituana, and the herdsman Jomo standing nearby; but the two tribesmen refuse to face the newcomers, who then look out at the field:

Their faces fill first with INCOMPREHENSION and then with HORROR as they see:

THAT THE PASTURE BEFORE THEM IS LITTERED WITH CARCASSES. SOME OF THE CARCASSES ARE STEERS, BUT FOR THE MOST PART:

THEY ARE HYAENAS. GORED AND TORN TO PIECES.

NEARBY, ONE STEER IS FINISHING THE LAST OF THE HYAENAS: ITS DEAD BODY WHIPS PITIFULLY FROM THE STEER'S HORNS. THE HYAENA FALLS TO THE GROUND AND THEN:

THE STEER BEGINS TO EAT IT.

MERRIN
What in hell -- ?

CHUMA
They killed them all -- the cattle. The hyaenas tried to attack, but the cattle killed them -- and then <u>ate</u> them. And now they themselves die of it.

Kio indicates one BLOODY-JAWED STEER that is STAGGERING DUMBLY TO AND FRO, ITS MOUTH STARTING TO FOAM. FINALLY IT FALLS TO THE GROUND WITH A SICKENING GROAN.

FRANCIS
That -- that's impossible!

CHUMA
But it happened. Jomo saw.
(indicating Jomo)
(MORE)

25 CONTINUED: 25

CHUMA (cont'd)
And told Sebituana and the other elders. Now the men will not work for you anymore --

Suddenly SEBITUANA APPROACHES MERRIN AND BEGINS TO BERATE HIM IN HIS NATIVE TONGUE.

MERRIN
(to Chuma)
What's he saying?

CHUMA
He wants you to stop the digging. He says that the diggers have told him about the Christian church under the ground -- he says it is an evil place, and that he won't let the men come back unless you bury it again.

As Sebituana storms off, Francis moves closer to Merrin, eyes on the field

FRANCIS
This is unnatural -- even unholy...

MERRIN
Is it, Father? For centuries our kind have been preaching that "the meek shall inherit the earth." Perhaps sometimes they actually do...

FRANCIS
This is no time for sarcasm, Merrin. I hope you see now how little it takes to threaten this work, and why I'm going to send a message to the Cardinal -- as well as to Captain Granville -- <u>now</u>.

Francis strides purposefully off, followed by Merrin and Chuma.

Only Jomo remains on the hill, leaning on his spear and staring out at the field as THE LAST OF THE MADDENED, DYING STEERS FALLS TO THE GROUND. Then he turns his steady, impressive gaze down toward the MOUTH OF THE CAVE.

CUT TO:

26 INT. FRANCIS'S SCHOOLROOM - AFTERNOON. 26

Francis now stands proudly before A DOZEN STUDENTS, who are singing a LATIN HYMN, their pronunciation poor but the SOUND beautiful. A CRUCIFIX now hangs on the wall, as do many

26 CONTINUED: 26

typical Western teaching aids: alphabet, handwriting chart, maps, etc.

Suddenly both Francis and the children turn when they hear a SOUND OUTSIDE:

LOUD TRUCK ENGINES.

Before Francis can dismiss the class they are racing for the door.

CUT TO:

27 EXT. THE MAIN STREET IN LODWAR - AFTERNOON. 27

Francis and the children rush out to see:

TWO BRITISH ARMY LORRIES ROLLING INTO THE TOWN. They circle round before coming to a halt in front of Emekwi's hotel.

Immediately after they've stopped a SERGEANT-MAJOR leaps from the passenger side of one truck and runs around to undo the canvas flaps on the backs of both vehicles.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
All right, come on, come on, out, out, out! You worthless lot of ugly men --
(as the men comply)
-- first platoon on the left, second platoon on the right!

As the SOLDIERS comply, Captain Granville emerges from the second truck, looking dusty, tired and somewhat bemused. He puts on a pair of sunglasses and smiles at A GROUP OF TURKANA ELDERS -- INCLUDING SEBITUANA -- WHO SCOWL AT HIM FROM NEARBY; but the smile goes pointedly unreturned.

GRANVILLE
(a quiet sigh)
Beloved wherever we go...
(aloud)
Sergeant-Major!

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Sir!

GRANVILLE
Have the men continue to stand at attention, will you? I've a feeling that those gentlemen are the local aristocracy, and I don't want to display even a hint of disrespect -- now or at any other time. Am I clear?

27 CONTINUED: 27

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Sir! Respect for the God-forsaken fuzzies at all times, sir!

GRANVILLE
Needless to say, Sergeant-Major, that is precisely the sort of comment --

Granville is cut off by the approaching Francis, behind whom walks a beaming Emekwi.

FRANCIS
Captain Granville!

GRANVILLE
Father. Delighted my men and I could accept your invitation .

FRANCIS
This is Emekwi -- he owns the town's hotel, and has provided a temporary home for our school.

EMEKWI
(shaking Granville's hand)
My bar and restaurant shall be open to your men at all times, Captain -- though unfortunately I do not have enough rooms to house you all --

GRANVILLE
Nor should we accept them if you did, sir. Our mission here is of a somewhat delicate nature, and it's my intention that we be as unintrusive as possible. We shall camp outside town -- along the route to the dig.
(looking around)
Speaking of which, where's our friend Merrin?

FRANCIS
I -- haven't seen him. Nor do I expect to. He's not very keen on this idea.

GRANVILLE
I'm not sure I am, either, Father.
(eyeing the elders)
And I'm quite certain those gentlemen aren't...

DISSOLVE TO:

28 EXT. THE CAVE DIG - EVENING. 28

BRITISH GUARDS are on patrol outside the dig.

Merrin emerges from the dig site and heads into the tent; he stops, however, when a TURKANA WORKER approaches and TELLS HIM SOMETHING. Merrin nods and heads over to his waiting Land Rover, which he starts up and DRIVES OFF.

CUT TO:

29 EXT. THE ROAD TO LODWAR FROM THE DIG - EVENING. 29

Merrin drives along, glancing over to:

THE CAMP OF THE BRITISH TROOPS: they are thoroughly established, indicating that at least A FEW DAYS HAVE PASSED SINCE THEIR ARRIVAL.

CUT TO:

30 EXT. RACHEL'S HOSPITAL - EVENING. 30

Merrin pulls up, jumping out to find Rachel giving rather urgent instructions, as well as a small PACKET, to a fairly distraught TURKANA WOMAN. The woman soon hustles away, and Merrin approaches Rachel.

MERRIN
What was all that about?

RACHEL
Sebituana's wife has gone into labor -- apparently she's in a great deal of pain. I told him to let her come into the clinic for the delivery, but there's even more than the usual amount of suspicion about white ways these days. For obvious reasons. At any rate, I've sent over some morphine... Well -- come in and let's do what we can for whom we can...

CUT TO:

31 INT. RACHEL'S HOSPITAL - EVENING/NIGHT. 31

Merrin follows Rachel in to find:

Cheche on one cot, which is partially enclosed by white screens. The boy's CRIPPLED LEG IS PROPPED UP, AND HAS BEEN CLEANED AND DISINFECTED IN PREPARATION FOR A PROCEDURE.

31 CONTINUED: 31

The boy is clearly frightened, but he smiles when he sees Merrin.

CHECHE
Baba...

RACHEL
Yes, Cheche, Baba is here, and just as soon as he cleans himself up we'll get started...

CUT TO:

32 EXT. THE TURKANA VILLAGE - NIGHTFALL. 32

TRACKING the Turkana woman we saw at the clinic as she races through the COLLECTION OF HUTS AND SHELTERS OUTSIDE LODWAR.

The woman heads for the biggest of the structures, around the entrance to which are crowded a DOZEN OR SO VILLAGERS. She pushes through them and enters.

CUT TO:

33 INT. SEBITUANA'S HUT - NIGHTFALL. 33

Sebituana and SEVERAL OTHER ELDERS AND TRIBESMEN are crowded around A GROUP OF WOMEN WHO ARE ATTENDING TO ANOTHER WOMAN WHO LIES SCREAMING ON A ROUGH-HEWN TABLE, ATTEMPTING TO GIVE BIRTH: but the delivery is clearly going badly.

The woman we've followed rushes up to Sebituana, offering the packet that Rachel gave her and mumbling something to him; but on hearing the words Sebituana only TAKES THE PACKET AND THROWS IT TO THE FLOOR, CRUSHING IT BENEATH HIS FOOT AND ANGRILY BERATING THE WOMAN.

CUT TO:

34 EXT. THE CAVE DIG - NIGHT. 34

DARKNESS has now fully fallen, and the only two people seemingly left at the site are TWO BRITISH GUARDS, a CORPORAL and a PRIVATE.

But when we PULL BACK to the nearby hilltop, we see that the two men are not in fact alone: THEY ARE BEING OBSERVED BY JOMO, WHO AS ALWAYS CARRIES AN IMPRESSIVE SPEAR.

The Private glances into the mouth of the cave, and we PICK UP THEIR CONVERSATION:

34 CONTINUED: 34

PRIVATE
What do you think -- they count 'em every night?

CORPORAL
Might do.

PRIVATE
"Might do." You got no more sense'n the fuzzies, corporal.

CORPORAL
'Ere -- respect the stripes, boy.

PRIVATE
"Respect the stripes," now it is. I tell you, there's thousands of the things, and just a handful would make us rich for the rest of our lives!

CORPORAL
Or get us hung.

PRIVATE
What about a look, eh?
(heading inside)
They can't hang us for looking, can they?

CORPORAL
'Ere -- private! You're leaving your post!

The Private disappears inside, and the Corporal, clearly against his better judgement, glances around and follows.

CUT TO

35 INT. RACHEL'S HOSPITAL - NIGHT. 35

Now wearing surgical garb, Merrin and Rachel stand by the bed, Merrin getting ready to administer GENERAL ANAESTHETIC to Cheche and Rachel arranging a slightly gruesome collection of ORTHOPAEDIC INSTRUMENTS.

Cheche continues to looking fearfully but trustingly to Merrin, who smiles at the boy.

MERRIN
His wounds certainly healed well...

RACHEL
Remarkably well. I hope we can do as well with this. Ready? Cheche, I want you to
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED: 35

RACHEL (cont'd)
start counting when Baba puts the mask on you.

Merrin gestures to the boy, using his own face, then places the mask on Cheche and STARTS TO COUNT IN CHECHE'S LANGUAGE. Cheche quietly joins in, soon passing out.

Rachel picks up A SCALPEL, MOVING IT TOWARD CHECHE'S LEG.

CUT TO:

36 INT. SEBITUANA'S HUT - NIGHT. 36

ANOTHER SHOT OF THE DELIVERY IN PROGRESS: a MIDWIFE is coaxing the child out of Sebituana's wife, and as the FIRST SIGN OF THE BABY'S BODY APPEARS:

EVERYONE ASSEMBLED AROUND THE TABLE REELS BACK, COVERING THEIR MOUTHS AND NOSES, EVIDENTLY STRUCK BY A HORRENDOUS STENCH. Several WOMEN SCREAM in horror.

CUT TO:

37 INT. THE CHURCH IN THE CAVE - NIGHT. 37

The Corporal and Private wander around in wide-eyed, greedy amazement.

PRIVATE
Jesus Christ...

The Corporal's attitude has changed markedly: there is now real greed in his face.

CORPORAL
Thousands of them -- every kind of precious stone...

PRIVATE
(taking out a bayonet)
And a handful is all I need...
(prying stones out)

CORPORAL
(also going for a bayonet)
All we need, Private -- we pool what we take, right?

PRIVATE
'Course, Corporal -- 'course.

Yet even as the Private says this the Corporal looks over to see him SLIP ONE GEM NONCHALANTLY INTO HIS POCKET.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: 37

The CORPORAL FROWNS LETHALLY AND GRIPS HIS BAYONET HARDER.

CUT TO:

38 INT. RACHEL'S HOSPITAL - NIGHT. 38

Cheche is now out cold, his BODY AND LEGS DRAPED. THERE IS AN OPENING OVER THE DEFORMED LEG, AND BLOOD AROUND THE OPENING.

Rachel holds an ORTHOPAEDIC HAMMER AND CHISEL OVER THIS OPENING: WE SEE HER RAISE THE HAMMER AND THEN:

WE HEAR IT COME DOWN ON BONE WITH A SICKENING CRACK.

Merrin winces at the sight and sound.

CUT TO:

39 INT. SEBITUANA'S HUT - NIGHT. 39

The FACE OF A WOMAN -- SCREAMING IN HORROR;

Then we see a SHOT OF SEBITUANA'S FACE: ALMOST INSANE WITH GRIEF AND REVULSION; FOLLOWING HIS GAZE WE SEE, IN THE HANDS OF THE MIDWIFE:

THE INFANT BOY -- LONG DEAD, ITS BLOODY BODY RIDDLED WITH WRITHING MAGGOTS.

Unable to do anything else, Sebituana points at his weeping, pain-racked WIFE and screams in his own tongue (we see SUBTITLES):

SEBITUANA
[Witch! This accursed witch has killed my son!]

CUT TO:

40 EXT. THE MAIN STREET OF LODWAR - NIGHT. 40

A HOWLING, DUSTY WIND SUDDENLY BLOWS THROUGH THE STREET, ALMOST DROWNING OUT THE SCREAMS AND WAILS OF THE TURKANA MEN AND WOMEN IN THE DISTANCE -- BUT NOT QUITE.

We follow the DUST as it BLOWS OUT OF TOWN AND UP TOWARD THE HILL WHERE THE CAVE DIG IS LOCATED.

DISSOLVE TO:

41 INT. THE CHURCH IN THE CAVE - THE NEXT MORNING. 41

CLOSE on Granville' horrified features.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: 41

As we pull back we see that he is standing in the church; and when we FOLLOW his gaze we see:

The Private and the Corporal from the night before; but THEY HAVE BEEN HORRIBLY MURDERED, AND THERE IS BLOOD LITERALLY EVERYWHERE:

The PRIVATE'S BATTERED BODY HAS BEEN DECAPITATED, AND HIS OPEN-EYED HEAD SITS ON A CAMPING PLATE ATOP A FOLDING TABLE;

The CORPORAL LIES UPSIDE-DOWN AGAINST ONE WALL, HIS LEGS UP, HIS SIDE TERRIBLY WOUNDED, AND ONE OF HIS OUTSTRETCHED HANDS PEGGED DOWN BY A BAYONET.

The Sergeant-Major and several other SOLDIERS, along with Merrin, Francis and Chuma, stand behind Granville, who continues to stare but manages to say:

GRANVILLE
Cover... them...

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Sir...?

GRANVILLE
(losing it)
Cover them, damn it! Lay them out and cover them up! They're British soldiers, I will not have them left like -- that!

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Of course, sir!
(to the other soldiers, gently)
All right, boys -- blankets and tarps. And you two -- help me with the bodies...

Granville stands it for as long as he can, then rushes outside, followed by Francis, Merrin, and Chuma.

CUT TO:

42 EXT. THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE - MORNING. 42

Granville runs into the canvas tent and douses his head with water, then takes a cup and fills it, without drinking.

The others approach, and Granville turns to Merrin: the Captain LOOKS DIFFERENT THAN WE'VE EVER SEEN HIM: very emotionally unstable, grief and anger sweeping away his usual reserve.

42 CONTINUED: 42

GRANVILLE
Who, Merrin? Why?

Merrin slowly holds up A HANDFUL OF GEMS.

MERRIN
When I found them this morning I also found these on the ground. They'd been pried out of the murals.

FRANCIS
Did they foil a robbery, then? And pay for it with their lives?

GRANVILLE
Yes... yes, a robbery...

MERRIN
But why would the thieves have left the stones behind?

FRANCIS
They may have been wounded -- or afraid the struggle would bring more soldiers.

GRANVILLE
Of -- course...
(looking toward the village)
Bloody savages...

Chuma eyes Merrin exchange an apprehensive look.

MERRIN
Captain Granville -- there's no reason to suspect the natives.

GRANVILLE
What?

MERRIN
Well, the -- the style of the deaths... the positioning of the bodies -- they recall Christian imagery, not pagan. John the Baptist, his head on a platter, and the apostle Peter, crucified upside --

GRANVILLE
Am I actually hearing this?! You're saying a Christian is responsible?! Are you insane, Merrin?!

42 CONTINUED: 42

MERRIN
(a long beat)
There -- was a witness, Captain.

GRANVILLE
Was there?
(eyes narrowing)
Then you get him in here. Now.

Merrin nods to Chuma, who signals outside to:

Jomo, who now enters, holding his spear. He stands proudly before Granville.

MERRIN
This is Jomo, Captain. He watches over the pastureland that lies above this place. He saw what happened to your men.

GRANVILLE
And?

Chuma speaks to Jomo in their native tonque for an instant, almost inaudibly.

GRANVILLE
And, damn it?!

CHUMA
He says -- he says that the two soldiers argued. One killed the other, then stabbed himself --

GRANVILLE
(moving toward them)
What the Devil are you saying?

CHUMA
They were stealing the jewels -- and then some sort of madness seemed to --

GRANVILLE
Shut your mouth! Not another word!
(a beat; pacing in anger)
That is the most -- tell this man that if he repeats such obscenities I'll arrest him, Chuma!

CHUMA
But --

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: 42

GRANVILLE
And you as well, do you understand?! The idea is not only absurd, it's an insult! Those men were with me for years, I trained them -- they were not thieves, and they were certainly not bloodthirsty lunatics!

Seeing that Granville is becoming increasingly irrational, Chuma whispers a few words to Jomo and guides him back out. Granville calls after them:

GRANVILLE
I've been lenient with you people, Chuma -- but warn your elders that unless they turn over the men who did this, life in this village will become distinctly less pleasant!

Granville's words strike Merrin like a thunderbolt.

MERRIN
Captain --

GRANVILLE
Do not choose the wrong side in this, Merrin -- remember what you owe to whom!

MERRIN
The wrong side? Captain, this isn't a war --

But Granville has already shoved past him, and is calling outside.

GRANVILLE
Sergeant-Major! Sergeant-Major!

The Sergeant-Major appears from inside the cave.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Sir!

GRANVILLE
Double the guard details, and start the rest of our men digging. As of now, this site is under military administration -- am I understood?!

Granville storms off before getting any answer.

42 CONTINUED: 42

Francis looks somewhat sheepishly at Merrin, who doesn't even know he's there: the older man gazes away, his face full of horrified apprehension.

DISSOLVE TO:

43 INT. RACHEL'S HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON. 43

Rachel stands over Cheche's bed, carefully watching the boy:

His face is sweating, as is the rest of his body, and his head moves from side to side in FEVERISH DELERIUM.

A KNOCK SOUNDS AT THE DOOR, and Rachel rushes to open it; Merrin stands outside.

MERRIN
I came as quickly as I could. Is he all right?

RACHEL
(confused)
Yes -- I'm sorry, I didn't mean to --

MERRIN
(holding her shoulders)
Rachel -- what's happened?

RACHEL
You'd better see for yourself...

The pair approach the bed, and Merrin's face fills with concern.

MERRIN
What's wrong with him? Is the leg infected?

RACHEL
Hardly...

Rachel draws the bedsheet covering Cheche's leg aside to REVEAL:

CHECHE'S LEG: THERE IS NO CAST ON IT, AND IT IS NOW ALMOST STRAIGHT, AS WELL AS UP TO A NORMAL WEIGHT AND STRENGTH.

MERRIN
What -- what's happening? Where is the cast?

43 CONTINUED: 43

RACHEL
He started to run the fever early this morning -- and there was a particular warmth radiating from the cast. I took it off, half-expecting to find gangrene. You can imagine my shock.

MERRIN
Then it is better?

RACHEL
(shrugging)
Virtually healed -- and the fever is dropping. But don't ask me why or how. It should have taken weeks, not days. I only hope...

MERRIN
What?

RACHEL
There are examples in medicine of false recovery -- of a body's systems appearing to improve, but too fast, unnaturally. It's actually evidence of a deeper problem --

MERRIN
Do you have any actual reason to think that's the case here?

RACHEL
I -- no. No, I don't.

MERRIN
So it's possible that you're just a better doctor than you knew?

RACHEL
(another shrug)
It's possible, I suppose. But --

MERRIN
But so many terrible things have happened in the last few days that you can't recognize a good one for what it is. Or "God in front of your face -- and in yourself."

RACHEL
(a smile)
Are you enjoying this?

43 CONTINUED: 43

MERRIN
(smiling back)
No. I'm just glad there's something to be grateful for -- this village has been on the verge of an explosion.

RACHEL
Yes. And I don't know who's more likely to ignite it, Sebituana or Granville.

The two move out onto the street to sit and talk on the threshhold of the hospital.

MERRIN
Were you able to determine what happened to Sebituana's child?

RACHEL
I'd been warning them about it for months. They were feeding the mother the usual diet of cow's blood mixed with milk -- a breeding ground for disease. There are any number of illneses that could have killed the infant. As for the maggots, well, the migration of such organisms into a living host is not at all uncommon, in areas like this. Add it all together and you have what could well pass for witchcraft.

MERRIN
And the mother?

RACHEL
Sebituana continues to blame her -- though so far as I can tell her punishment has yet to be determined. And what of your dig?

MERRIN
(shrugging)
We're making what progress we can -- but it's absurd to expect that occupational troops --

Both Merrin and Rachel turn suddenly when they hear a NOISE:

AN APPROACHING CROWD, MOVING THROUGH TOWN FROM THE TURKANA VILLAGE AND TOWARD THE OPEN SAVANNAH BEYOND.

In a SHOT of the crowd we see that SEBITUANA'S WIFE is BOUND and being dragged along by Sebituana and several other ELDERS, as well as Jomo. The woman is still sickly; but she

43 CONTINUED: 43

is also terrified and weeping, and desperately CALLS OUT TO RACHEL AS THE CROWD PASSES THE CLINIC. Rachel ANSWERS IN THEIR LANGUAGE (we again see subtitles):

WIFE
[Lady -- lady doctor, help me, I beg you!]

Rachel and Merrin rush over.

RACHEL
[Sebituana! What is this, what are you doing?!]

But Sebituana only shields his wife from Rachel and gives the latter a cold, indicting stare. The other tribe members do the same as they pass, except for several of the WOMEN, who are weeping and wailing.

Behind the mob trail Chuma, Francis and Emekwi, who rush up to Merrin.

EMEKWI
It is decided, Merrin -- the woman is to die, for killing the child.

RACHEL
But she <u>didn't</u>, damn it all!

CHUMA
Sebituana has ruled that she did -- and the punishment for such witchcraft is death.

MERRIN
What do you mean -- where are they taking her?

CHUMA
The dead cattle and hyaenas attracted lions -- you have heard them, the last two nights?

MERRIN
Yes.

EMEKWI
Jomo and the others will take the woman to a tree on the plain -- they will tie her to it and cut her. The blood will draw the lions.

43 CONTINUED: 43

FRANCIS
My God, Merrin, she's to be eaten alive by the beasts!

CHUMA
I fear this, Merrin. I fear what is happening -- to my people, to your people.

MERRIN
(rushing off)
It's got to stop -- now...

CUT TO:

44 EXT. THE PLAIN OUTSIDE LODWAR - NIGHT. 44

We see SEVERAL SHOTS of Jomo and the Turkana elders doing just what Emekwi described:

THEY DRAG SEBITUANA'S HYSTERICAL WIFE TO AN OLD, SCRAGGLY ACACIA TREE THAT IS A SAFE DISTANCE FROM TOWN;

THEY BIND HER TO IT, AND THEN;

JOMO STEPS UP AND CUTS HER ARMS WITH HIS SPEAR.

The men then VANISH INTO THE DARKNESS TOWARD TOWN, LEAVING THE WOMAN TO SCREAM AND CALL OUT FOR HELP.

CUT TO:

45 EXT. THE EDGE OF TOWN - NIGHT. 45

As the SCREAMS OF SEBITUANA'S WIFE ECHO THROUGH THE NIGHT, we SEE Merrin, Rachel and Francis ARGUING AT CLOSE QUARTERS WITH SEBITUANA HIMSELF. We can't quite make out what they're saying, which doesn't matter, because just as JOMO AND THE OTHER MEN RETURN:

A SOUND STRIKES EVERY HUMAN DUMB: THE CHILLING ECHO OF ROARING LIONS.

All eyes turn toward the dark plain.

CHUMA
It is too late -- they are here...

MERRIN
No -- no, there's still time, there must be!

45 CONTINUED: 45

RACHEL
(in Turkana; subtitled)
[Sebituana -- I tell you again, it was not her fault --]

SEBITUANA
[Why should I listen to you?! You tried to help the witch, just as you now try to help the cursed boy, Cheche!]

MERRIN
Enough of this -- I'm going out there.

FRANCIS
So am I. Rachel, tell Sebituana that Merrin and I are going to help the woman. Tell him if we die our deaths will also be on his head. Does he wish that?

Rachel starts to TRANSLATE, but Sebituana cuts her off:

SEBITUANA
(to his men)
[Stop the whites! They would help the witch!]

Very quickly, Jomo LEVELS HIS SPEAR AT MERRIN AND FRANCIS, AND THE OTHER TURKANA MEN GATHER AROUND, MAKING MENACING MOVES WITH THEIR OWN WEAPONS. The standoff is about to get ugly, when:

THE ROARS OF THE LIONS SUDDENLY INCREASE IN VOLUME, AND THEN:

THE SCREAMS OF THE BOUND WOMAN CHANGE: THEY BECOME HORRIFYING, HIGH PITCHED CRIES OF AGONY, MIXED IN WITH THE SOUNDS OF LIONS FIGHTING FOR FOOD.

Everyone gathered at the edge of town again GROWS SILENT, and in a few quick, terrible seconds the SOUNDS diminish; but then;

THEY ARE REPLACED BY SEVERAL RIFLE SHOTS, COMING FROM TOWN.

The crowd turns to see:

THE BRITISH TROOPS, MOVING DOUBLE-QUICK THROUGH THE MAIN STREET TOWARD THE EDGE OF TOWN -- they are FULLY ARMED.

Captain Granville and the Sergeant-Major stride purposefully along behind them:

Granville's face is now ENTIRELY TRANSFORMED: ALL TRACES OF GENTILITY, UNDERSTANDING OR KINDNESS ARE GONE, AND THE HORROR

45 CONTINUED: 45

AND ANGER WE SAW HIM EXHIBIT IN THE CAVE HAVE COALESCED INTO CALCULATED RUTHLESSNESS.

The soldiers TRAIN THEIR WEAPONS ON THE CROWD, as Granville moves up to Merrin and Rachel. The captain looks beyond them to the darkened plain, where the LIONS CONTINUE TO GROWL AND OCCASIONALLY BELLOW: BUT THERE IS NO HUMAN VOICE AMONG THE SOUNDS, NOW.

FRANCIS
Captain Granville -- thank God. Quickly, we need your help to stop --

GRANVILLE
I've heard what's happening, Father. And I have no intention of risking any more of my men over one of these people's murderous rituals.

FRANCIS
But -- the woman, she --

GRANVILLE
Don't be a fool, Francis. The woman is already dead.

As Merrin realizes that Granville is right, his own face fills with dark, angry resignation.

MERRIN
And so why are you here? To enjoy the carnival?

GRANVILLE
As it happens, Merrin, no. This butcher, Sebituana, has been good enough to gather his people in one place. Which is precisely where I want them.
(approaching Sebituana)
You've had your retribution, have you? Good. Now I'll have mine... Sergeant-Major -- let's move them back into town!

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Sir! All right, then -- let's move these heathen bastards! Fix bayonets!

The SOUND OF BAYONETS SNAPPING ONTO RIFLE BARRELS FOLLOWS, and then the British troops begin to heard the Turkana people back toward the center of town.

CUT TO:

46 EXT. THE MAIN STREET OF LODWAR - NIGHT. 46

Moving in a way that is entirely too reminiscent of what we earlier witnessed in Holland, THE BRITISH TROOPS BEGIN TO FORM THE TURKANA PEOPLE INTO LINES SEVERAL DEEP, THEN MOVE ACROSS THE DUSTY CENTER OF TOWN TO FACE THEM WITH THEIR RIFLES.

As they go, Merrin and the others pursue in silent desperation; then, as they pass Rachel's hospital:

Cheche appears at the door, looking very frightened and weak BUT ACTUALLY WALKING. He calls out to Merrin:

CHECHE
Baba!

Merrin sees the boy, but cannot abandon the ongoing crisis. He turns to Francis.

MERRIN
Father -- I need Rachel to help me translate. Can you tend to the boy?

FRANCIS
Yes -- of course. But <u>make</u> him understand, Merrin...

Merrin nods and continues on with Rachel, and then we watch Francis approach Cheche, put his arms around him and take him back inside.

FRANCIS
All right, Cheche, it'll be all right, my son, but you must get back into bed and rest...

We continue to FOLLOW Merrin and Rachel as they rush up to Granville: the Captain is now striding before his assembled men, who look not unlike a large firing squad.

MERRIN
Captain Granville -- stop this now, please, you don't understand --

GRANVILLE
Sergeant-Major!

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Sir!

46 CONTINUED: 46

GRANVILLE
(indicating Merrin and the others)
I want these people kept at a distance. If they attempt to interfere, they're to be arrested, and if they resist, shoot them down!

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Sir?

GRANVILLE
Do it!

SERGEANT-MAJOR
(hesitating again, but nodding)
Sir!

The Sergeant-Major gently but firmly starts to moves Merrin, Rachel, Emekwi and Chuma to a distance.

GRANVILLE
Not him.
(grabbing Chuma)
I'll need an interpreter.
(pulling his pistol)
And interpret carefully, Chuma...

As Granville speaks on, we HEAR Chuma TRANSLATE SIMULTANEOUSLY.

GRANVILLE
Tell them that I have waited long enough to learn who killed my men. This is a small town -- one of them must know who is responsible. I offer one more chance for that person to reveal the murderer's name.

A short distance away, Rachel looks up at Merrin, aghast.

RACHEL
Merrin -- ?

MERRIN
(dazed)
It can't be -- not again...
(shaking himself)
Sergeant-Major -- I warn you, unless you act quickly you will be allowing your captain to turn himself into a murderer!

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

The Sergeant-Major continues to guard Merrin, Rachel and Emekwi, but looks uneasily over to Granville.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Sir! With respect, sir, may I ask what the Captain intends, sir?!

GRANVILLE
Silence, Sergeant-Major!
(to Chuma)
Do they understand, Chuma?

CHUMA
They understand the words -- but not the meaning.

GRANVILLE
What kind of savage double-talk is that?!

CHUMA
They say everyone knows that your soldiers killed each other -- that they were stealing, and went mad --

GRANVILLE
Shut your mouth!

GRANVILLE PISTOL-WHIPS CHUMA TO THE GROUND, then races up to Sebituana in a frenzy.

GRANVILLE
I told you never to repeat those filthy assertions, didn't I?! Didn't I?! And yet you have the nerve, you vile, ignorant -- do you think you're the law here?! Do you?! Then perhaps you need a demonstration --

MERRIN
(desperately)
Sergeant -- stop him, I beg of you!

SERGEANT-MAJOR
(turning)
Sir? Captain Granville?!

But Granville is oblivious.

GRANVILLE
-- perhaps you still hide your murderers because you don't fear me, yet! Well, my friend, let me assure you --

46 CONTINUED: 46

Still holding his pistol in his hand and his face to Sebituana's, GRANVILLE GRABS FOR THE NATIVE NEAREST TO THEM:

A YOUNG WOMAN.

GRANVILLE
-- if a reason for fear is what you need, then I can oblige!

And BLAM!, GRANVILLE FIRES ALMOST WITHOUT LOOKING:

THE YOUNG WOMAN SLUMPS TO THE GROUND, DEAD.

THE TURKANA JUMP BACK IN FEAR AND GROW SILENT. THE BRITISH SOLDIERS LOOK SIMILARLY STUNNED AND UNCERTAIN.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Sir!

The Sergeant-Major now abandons his guard duty and runs to Captain Granville, whose EYES GO WIDE IN SHOCK AS HE TRIES TO CATCH HIS BREATH AND REALIZES WHAT IN FACT HAS HAPPENED.

Merrin and Rachel rush to the dead woman, as the Sergeant-Major guides Granville back a few steps.

Rachel examines the woman quickly, then shakes her head at Merrin. Merrin looks up and, realizing Granville's condition, speaks to the Sergeant-Major.

MERRIN
You'd better get him out of here, Sergeant. The rest of your men, as well. Quickly.

The Sergeant-Major and Granville disappear.

DISSOLVE TO:

47 EXT. LODWAR - SUNRISE. 47

A peaceful SHOT of the still town at DAYBREAK: ALL IS CALM.

The only MOVEMENT is a few CHILDREN RUSHING FURTIVELY AMONG THE BUILDINGS TOWARD EMEKWI'S HOTEL.

CUT TO:

48 EXT. RACHEL'S HOSPITAL - SUNRISE. 48

Francis sleeps by Cheche's bed. We see a SHOT OF HIS FACE, and over it WE HEAR A DISEMBODIED VOICE: PART BOY'S, PART

48 CONTINUED:

MAN'S, AND PART CREATURE'S, SPEAKING FAINTLY IN LATIN, ALMOST AS IF FRANCIS WERE DREAMING IT:

VOICE
Sua culpa, sua culpa, sua maxima culpa...
["Your fault, your fault, your most grievous fault"]

Francis shifts uncomfortably, then starts a bit when a hand shakes him:

It's Merrin.

FRANCIS
Merrin!

MERRIN
I'm sorry I startled you, Father.

FRANCIS
(waking fully)
Did you -- did you just say something, by any chance? In -- in Latin?

MERRIN
You were dreaming.

FRANCIS
Oh. Yes... Where have you been? Were you out all night?

MERRIN
Not quite. I was up at the dig.
(indicates Cheche)
Has he been sleeping long?

FRANCIS
Yes, once he drifted off he became quite docile. He doesn't seem to be in any discomfort at all.

MERRIN
All right, then -- I'll take over. You have things to do.

FRANCIS
Precious little, I fear -- I doubt there'll be much of a class.

Francis moves to exit, then turns to give Merrin another glance; he grows concerned when he sees the exhaustion evident in Merrin's face.

48 CONTINUED: 48

FRANCIS
Are you sure you're all right, Merrin?

MERRIN
No, Father. But I'm sure I can watch the boy until Rachel wakes.

FRANCIS
Prayer, Merrin -- it is all we have, at such moments.

MERRIN
Yes -- but it isn't enough, Father. It isn't enough...

FRANCIS
(a beat)
Forgive me, Merrin, but -- can you not try, even now, to open your heart to God once more? After all, He did not force you to wander from Him, he allowed you to, out of love and respect for your freedom -- and if you now find that you are lost, you must have faith that His love will guide you back to enlightenment. You have only to ask.

MERRIN
I'm sorry, Father -- but I haven't had much luck asking God for help...

Francis shakes his head and slowly exits, while Merrin sits by the bed, touching Cheche's forehead. When he does we SEE:

A ROSARY TIED AROUND MERRIN'S HAND. He immediately takes it off and lets in dangle from the corner post of Cheche's bed.

CUT TO:

49 INT. FRANCIS'S SCHOOLROOM - MORNING. 49

Francis enters, to see:

Only James and Joseph, Emekwi's sons, at the tables. Francis looks disappointed but understanding.

FRANCIS
All right, boys -- let's offer a prayer and then open our texts...

CUT TO:

50 EXT. FRANCIS'S SCHOOLROOM - MORNING. 50

We SEE the CHILDREN who were darting through the streets before -- perhaps three or four of them -- now moving carefully to and through the schoolhouse door. Then we PULL BACK TO SEE:

JOMO, WATCHING THEM FROM ACROSS THE ROAD, SPEAR AS EVER IN HAND.

CUT TO:

51 INT. FRANCIS'S SCHOOLROOM - MORNING. 51

The children enter, and Francis's face lights up. He moves toward them.

FRANCIS
Well! I didn't think I would see so many of you, today. When you go home you must thank your families --

Francis is cut off by one of the NERVOUS SCHOOLCHILDREN:

SCHOOLCHILD
Our families not know, Father. They say we must not come -- they say that Jesus Christ killed Falashadey --

FRANCIS
Falashadey -- that was her name?

SCHOOLCHILD
Yes. And so we come to school -- because if we do <u>not</u> come, maybe Jesus Christ will kill <u>us</u>, too --

FRANCIS
Stop that, do you hear? Jesus Christ did <u>not</u> kill that young woman -- the British captain did, and it was very wrong and wicked --

And then, suddenly, THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN, REVEALING:

JOMO, HIS SPEAR HELD HIGH. HIS FACE IS SIMULTANEOUSLY FULL OF RAGE, SORROW AND FEAR.

From the first, Francis seems to know why he's come: the priest SHIELDS THE CHILDREN, HOLDING A HAND UP.

FRANCIS
Jomo! No, you must not --

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: 51

But Jomo only KNOCKS FRANCIS UNCONSCIOUS WITH HIS SPEAR, THEN TURNS TOWARD THE FRONT OF THE ROOM, TO WHICH THE CHILDREN HAVE RETREATED:

HE ADVANCES ON THEM WITH, AGAIN, BOTH REGRET AND MENACE.

CUT TO:

52 INT. RACHEL'S HOSPITAL - MORNING. 52

Now it is Merrin who is dozing in the chair next to the boy. He wakes when he hears the DISTANT SOUND OF CHILDREN SCREAMING: looking outside, he sees SEVERAL PEOPLE HEADED FOR THE SCHOOLHOUSE. Without thinking, Merrin DASHES OUT.

After he has gone, we see a CLOSE SHOT OF CHECHE'S FACE: HIS EYES POP OPEN.

CUT TO:

53 EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE THE SCHOOLHOUSE - MORNING. 53

Merrin runs through the street quickly, past the other villagers who are approaching.

On his way into the schoolhouse he encounters EMEKWI, WHO CARRIES A SHOTGUN.

MERRIN
Emekwi! What's going on?!

EMEKWI
The schoolhouse -- !

And with that the two men dash through the open schoolhouse door.

CUT TO:

54 INT. THE SCHOOLHOUSE - MORNING. 54

Merrin and Emekwi enter a scene of UTTER HORROR:

MOST OF THE CHILDREN LIE ATOP DESKS, EACH STABBED SEVERAL TIMES, ONE OR TWO WITH THEIR THROATS CUT; ONLY JAMES, EMEKWI'S OLDER SON, HAS BEEN ABLE TO EVADE JOMO, BUT JOMO NOW HAS HIM TRAPPED IN A CORNER AND IS MOVING ON HIM WITH THE SPEAR.

EMEKWI, HIS FACE FULL OF AGONY, IMMEDIATELY RUSHES FORWARD AND RAISES THE SHOTGUN.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: 54

MERRIN
Emekwi -- no! Jomo!

But Emekwi PULLS THE TRIGGER AND THE BLAST SENDS JOMO FLYING INTO A WALL.

JAMES RUNS TO HIS FATHER, AND EMEKWI DROPS THE GUN, SWEEPS THE BOY INTO HIS ARMS AND AT THE SAME TIME DASHES OVER TO HOLD JOSEPH.

EMEKWI
Joseph! My son, my son!

But Joseph is clearly DEAD.

Rachel runs into the room, followed by other VILLAGERS WHO BEGIN TO WAIL UNCONTROLLABLY. Aghast, Rachel quickly goes to each child and tries to find signs of life; but there are none.

When she hears a GROAN come from the unconscious Francis, she rushes to him.

Merrin, meanwhile, rushes over to the dying Jomo and leans over him. Emekwi joins him, still holding his son.

MERRIN
Why, Jomo? Why?!

Jomo clearly understands Merrin's meaning: he says something in reply, and then DIES. Merrin looks to Emekwi.

MERRIN
What did he say?

EMEKWI
He said -- that the children here -- are too young to fight the Christian evil... They had to die... so that the evil would not spread...

Emekwi then approaches Francis, who lies on the floor being nursed by Rachel. Emekwi holds out his dead boy.

EMEKWI
This, Father?! Is this the thanks of the Almighty for all that I have done in his name?!

Francis has no answer, and Emekwi wanders away.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: 54

Merrin turns to view the carnage in the room, ever more confused and despairing.

DISSOLVE TO:

55 EXT. THE CAVE DIG - SUNSET. 55

Merrin pulls up slowly in his Land Rover, to find Chuma waiting.

He then catches sight of something on the nearby HILLSIDE:

It's Captain Granville. In a CLOSE SHOT WE SEE HIM SITTING ON THE GROUND, LOOKING UTTERLY BEREFT OF ANYTHING SAVE DERANGED GUILT AND GRIEF.

MERRIN
How long has he been up there?

CHUMA
Through the night.

MERRIN
Does he know?

CHUMA
His men told him. It is bad with him, Merrin -- someone must talk to him.

MERRIN
(bitterly)
Well -- it's not going to be me...

Chuma follows Merrin as the latter wanders into the cave.

CUT TO:

56 INT. RACHEL'S HOSPITAL - NIGHT. 56

Francis lies DOZING FITFULLY on one bed, his wounds bound and his bruises treated.

Rachel crosses by Cheche's bed, catching sight of something that makes her APPROACH THE BOY.

RACHEL
It isn't -- it isn't possible...

She then rushes over to Francis's bed, and gently rocks the sleeping priest.

56 CONTINUED:

RACHEL
Father -- Father Francis -- can you hear me?

FRANCIS
(coming around)
What is -- Rachel?
(sitting up)
What is it, what -- what's happened?

RACHEL
Don't move too quickly, Father. There's nothing -- wrong, precisely. It's simply that -- well -- do you feel strong enough to cross the room?

FRANCIS
I -- I think so.
(rising with her help)
But what --

RACHEL
I think you'd better see for yourself.

The pair cross over to Cheche's bed, and then look down at the slumbering boy. Francis's eyes go wise as he sees:

THAT CHECHE'S WITHERED ARM HAS BEEN RESTORED.

FRANCIS
(whispering)
My God -- his arm... Rachel, how did you --

RACHEL
I don't know -- I'm not entirely sure that I did. I've been treating his leg.

FRANCIS
Could there have been side-effects to your treatment?

RACHEL
Apparently. Unless...

FRANCIS
Unless?

RACHEL
It's more your province than mine, Father, but -- unless you believe in miracles.
(grabbing a jacket)
(MORE)

56 CONTINUED: 56

RACHEL (cont'd)
Merrin's up at the dig -- I've got to fetch him. He needs to be here when Cheche wakes up, the poor boy's going to be terribly confused. Will you be all right with him while I go?

FRANCIS
Of course.

Rachel smiles, touches Francis's arm, and heads out.

Francis continues to study Cheche, awed but pleased.

FRANCIS
A miracle? Perhaps...
(touching Cheche's face)
Perhaps you are the one proof of God in this terrible place --
(turning, taking a few steps away)
For you are certainly the only innocent creature...

Francis is moving silently and slowly toward a nearby chair when he HEARS:

THE SAME VOICE THAT CAME TO HIM EARLIER WHILE HE WAS SLEEPING: PART BOY, PART MAN, PART SOMETHING ELSE:

VOICE
Sua culpa, sua maxima culpa...

Francis SPINS BACK AROUND, so fast that he must grip his injured head and hold the back of the chair to stay upright;

BUT CHECHE IS APPARENTLY STILL ASLEEP.

Francis approaches the boy's bed again in DELIRIOUS AGITATION.

FRANCIS
You <u>know</u>...? You <u>know</u> my guilt, child? But how...?
(smiling, trembling)
Of course -- there is no other explanation. The spirit of our Savior is in you! And it will point the way out of this darkness. I must acknowledge it -- I must show --

Francis looks around feverishly, and then HIS EYES SETTLE ON THE ROSARY THAT HANGS ON THE CORNER POST OF CHECHE'S BED.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

Francis takes up the rosary, kisses the CRUCIFIX that dangles from its end, and then holds it over Cheche.

FRANCIS
Lord, I pray thee: hear my voice as I have heard thine. Let this blessed child continue to be thy messenger, that we may know thy will and thy wisdom --

Francis is about to go on BUT WHEN HE TOUCHES THE CRUCIFIX TO CHECHE'S FOREHEAD THE BOY SUDDENLY SCREAMS IN PAIN, IN THE SAME VOICE THAT SPOKE THE LATIN. IN ADDITION:

HE BOLTS UPRIGHT, A VICIOUS LOOK IN HIS WIDE OPEN EYES; THEN HE GRABS THE ROSARY FROM FRANCIS AND WHIPS IT HARD ACROSS THE PRIEST'S FACE;

THE ROSARY FLIES APART, FRANCIS TOPPLES BACKWARD TO THE FLOOR, AND CHECHE STARES DOWN AT HIM HATEFULLY, YELLING IN PERFECT ENGLISH:

CHECHE
DO NOT TOUCH ME WITH THE SIGN OF THAT WHORING BASTARD, YOU MURDEROUS FOOL!

And then Cheche COLLAPSES BACK ONTO HIS BED.

Francis gingerly gets up onto his knees, not quite sure if he's just seen and heard all he has; but then he TOUCHES BLOOD ON HIS FACE WHERE THE ROSARY STRUCK HIM, and crawls to Cheche's bed:

The boy seems to be sleeping peacefully as before, except that:

THE SILHOUETTE OF THE CRUCIFIX FROM THE ROSARY IS NOW BURNED INTO HIS FOREHEAD.

CUT TO:

57 EXT. RACHEL'S HOSPITAL - A FEW MINUTES LATER. 57

Rachel pulls up in her battered truck/ambulance, with Merrin in the passenger seat. As they get out we join them in MID-CONVERSATION:

MERRIN
... but you've admitted yourself that there was no way to predict how the boy would respond to the drugs and the treatment --

57 CONTINUED: 57

RACHEL
Yes, Merrin, I know, and I'm not seriously asking you to believe in miracles. It's simply that I can't explain --

Just as the pair are about to enter the hospital the DOOR FLIES OPEN, REVEALING:

FRANCIS, LOOKING EXTREMELY SHOCKED BUT TRYING TO CONTROL HIS VOICE:

FRANCIS
The boy must be baptized -- at once...

CUT TO:

58 INT. THE BACK ROOM OF THE HOSPITAL - LATER THAT NIGHT. 58

Francis, Merrin and Rachel are deep in conversation, while THROUGH THE OPEN DOOR WE CAN SEE THAT CHECHE IS STILL ASLEEP IN HIS BED.

RACHEL
Father -- please try to remember, you've received a strong blow to the head, and before treating it I administered a sedative --

FRANCIS
Which you yourself have said would have had time to wear off, Doctor.

RACHEL
Perhaps, but such drugs have long half-lives, and unpredictable psychological side-effects.

FRANCIS
If you'll pardon my saying so, Rachel, that's a particularly paltry explanation --

MERRIN
Yes. It is.

FRANCIS
Thank God -- then you accept what I'm saying, Merrin --

MERRIN
Accept that some evil spirit is at work in this town? I didn't say that, Father.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: 58

MERRIN (cont'd)
But I also don't believe that there's a physical explanation for your hallucinations --

FRANCIS
Hallucinations? Merrin, I assure you --

MERRIN
Father -- you've come to a violent corner of the world, one for which your life, your experience, hasn't prepared you in the slightest. Your mind has reacted by removing itself from an unacceptable reality. I've seen it happen many times.

FRANCIS
Oh, this is even better -- so I'm not hallucinating, I'm insane.

MERRIN
I didn't say that. But you've never actually encountered meaningless human violence before --

FRANCIS
There is no violence without meaning, Merrin. If we cannot grasp that meaning, it is only a sign of our own limitations.

MERRIN
The fact that you can continue to say such things after all we've been through only demonstrates your mental state.

FRANCIS
Or, perhaps, the depth of my faith.
(stronger)
What about the burn on his forehead? Am I imagining that?

RACHEL
An injury in the rough shape of a cross? It could have any number of explanations -- if he did have a seizure of some sort, as you say --

FRANCIS
Ah. So now I'm sane again.

RACHEL
(firmly)
He could have cut his head, or scraped it violently against the edge of the bed, causing what appears to be a burn --

58 CONTINUED: 58

MERRIN
(carefully)
Unless you yourself did it.

FRANCIS
(shocked)
While in the midst of my delirium, I suppose? Merrin, I think it may be you who have been through too much. And what about his perfect use of formal English?
(off Merrin's silence)
Oh, of course, I imagined that, too. All right, let's assume that what you say is true -- what harm can there be in the idea of his being baptized?

RACHEL
A great deal, Father. These people hate and fear Cheche enough -- do you really want to expose him to further danger by having him join a religion that they now equate with evil?

MERRIN
And there is a larger danger -- we can't hope to defuse this situation by chalking it up to the work of -- of --

FRANCIS
Say it, Merrin -- or can't you? The work of Satan.

MERRIN
I won't allow you to aggravate this situation with that kind of talk! You don't have to look further than the fears and ambitions of every human being involved in this situation to understand what "evil" is at work, Father. And don't forget that we're still trying to protect a major archaeological discovery, which the Turkana already consider dangerous --

FRANCIS
Perhaps it is.

MERRIN
(stunned)
If you honestly think that, then you have no further business being here.

58 CONTINUED: 58

FRANCIS
My only concern right now is the eternal soul of that boy in there!
(to Merrin)
Are you so arrogant, Merrin, that you would involve the rest of the world in your own crisis of faith? Would you deny what you once cherished to someone who may want it simply because you now doubt it?

MERRIN
(uncertain)
What -- makes you think he may want it?

FRANCIS
I can suggest a very simple method of finding out -- why don't we ask him?

Without waiting for an answer, Francis leads the others into the ward room and stand by Cheche's bed.

Cheche has woken up, and seems himself: he is STUDYING HIS RESTORED ARM with amazement and happiness. We NOTICE THAT THE BOY IS STARTING TO LOOK GENERALLY MUCH STRONGER.

MERRIN
Fassi?

CHECHE
(holding his arm up)
Baba! See!

FRANCIS
Cheche --
(to Rachel)
Can you translate, please, Doctor? Ask him if he wants to become a Christian like Baba and myself.
(to Merrin)
Unless you object to being classified as such.

But Merrin only takes a few steps away, not at all comfortable.

CUT TO:

59 EXT. THE HILLSIDE NEAR THE CAVE - NIGHT. 59

Captain Granville sits where we last saw him, the same strange, distracted look on his face. He is POLISHING HIS SERVICE REVOLVER.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: 59

The Sergeant-Major, looking very worried, climbs the hill to join him.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Captain Granville! Captain Granville, sir! You've been up here for almost twenty-four hours, hadn't you better --
(seeing the gun)
You -- all right, sir?

GRANVILLE
(blankly)
All -- right... I shall be down -- momentarily...

The Sergeant-Major nods and turns to go, then stops when Granville calls out:

GRANVILLE
Oh, and Sergeant-Major?

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Sir?

GRANVILLE
I shall need you to give Mr. Merrin a message, when I'm brought down.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
"Brought down," sir?

GRANVILLE
Tell him -- tell him I know, now, how it's been for him all these years. But tell him he's wrong to think that there's any way out -- other than --

With startling SUDDENNESS, GRANVILLE PUTS THE PISTOL INTO HIS MOUTH.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Captain!

But BLAM!, it's too late: GRANVILLE PULLS THE TRIGGER AND ROCKETS BACK OVER ONTO THE GROUND, DEAD.

The Sergeant-Major, distraught, runs back up to where the Captain lies, instantly realizing the hopelessness of the situation; then he looks into Granville's LEFT HAND, WHICH IN DEATH HAS FALLEN OPEN TO REVEAL:

59 CONTINUED: 59

A COLLECTION OF SILVER-COLORED BRITISH COINS.

CUT TO:

60 EXT. RACHEL'S HOSPITAL - NIGHT. 60

Francis, Rachel and Merrin step out into the street.

FRANCIS
Then it's agreed? I shall perform the ceremony tomorrow evening.

RACHEL
Very well, Father.

Francis is about to walk off, and then he and the other two turn to see:

AN APPROACHING BRITISH LORRY. VILLAGERS gather round as the vehicle, driven by the Sergeant-Major, rolls slowly up to the hospital.

As it stops two SOLDIERS get out of the back and remove a covered STRETCHER THAT BEARS A CORPSE.

MERRIN
Sergeant -- what is it, what's happened?

But the devastated Sergeant-Major only watches the soldiers bring the stretcher to the doorway, then he draws the covering blanket back to reveal GRANVILLE' MANGLED HEAD.

RACHEL
Oh, my God...

Rachel begins to examine the body.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
(blankly)
Don't bother, Doctor. He's dead -- seen him do it. Asked me to give Mr. Merrin a message -- said he knew what you were going through, sir. And that this was the only way out of it. Any idea what he meant?

Merrin, thunderstruck by the words, only shakes his head and stares at the body.

FRANCIS
Did he say nothing else? Leave no -- no note, no communication for his family?

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: 60

SERGEANT-MAJOR
None, sir. But he had these in his hand.

The Sergeant holds his own hand up to Francis's and releases the SILVER COINS.

FRANCIS
Coins?

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Silver coins, Father. Thirty of them.
(looking at the body)
He never meant to kill that girl -- it went against every part of the Captain's nature. But something got into him... Something... At any rate, Mr. Merrin, sir -- some of the boys, they -- they ain't taking this too well. The Captain was much liked. So if you have any pull with the fuzzies -- I'd advise 'em to step quietly.

MERRIN
I'll do what I can. Thank you, Sergeant. Will you be pulling out of here now?

SERGEANT-MAJOR
(a shrug)
Got no orders to do so, sir. I'll wait for 'em.
(to Rachel)
You'll see to his body, Doctor?
(off her nod)
Thank you.

The Sergeant-Major climbs back aboard the truck with his men, and then the vehicle pulls away.

Merrin looks to Francis, who slowly lets the THIRTY SILVER COINS FALL TO THE GROUND, then stares after the truck.

FRANCIS
God help this place...

Over Merrin's shoulder we can just see:

CHECHE, WATCHING WHAT'S HAPPENING THROUGH A WINDOW. As we MOVE IN ON HIS FACE, WE SEE THAT HE IS SMILING IN A VERY UNCHARACTERISTIC AND DISTURBING MANNER: SATISFIED, KNOWING, EVEN A BIT SEDUCTIVE.

DISSOLVE TO:

61 EXT. SEBITUANA'S HUT - THE FOLLOWING SUNSET. 61

TURKANA TRIBESMEN DRESSED IN WAR GARB AND PAINTED APPROPRIATELY ARE WAITING EXPECTANTLY.

Sebituana soon EMERGES, AND SHOUTS something to them; THEY REPLY BY RAISING THEIR SPEARS AND BEGINNING AN AGGRESIVE, EERIE CHANT.

CUT TO:

62 EXT. THE CAVE DIG - EVENING. 62

BRITISH SOLDIERS emerge from the cave, sweaty and subdued at the end of the day's work.

Francis and Rachel drive up in her vehicle, the BACK OF WHICH IS COVERED. They get out and draw the canvas back to reveal:

Cheche, lying on a STRETCHER and looking FRIGHTENED AND INNOCENT, NOT AT ALL AS WE LAST SAW HIM LOOK.

Rachel helps the boy to his feet as Francis takes a priest's TRAVELLING BAPTISM AND COMMUNION CASE from the truck, then asks a SOLDIER a question. The man points INSIDE, AND THEN FRANCIS, RACHEL AND CHECHE DISAPPEAR WITHIN.

CUT TO:

63 INT. THE TEMPLE BENEATH THE CAVE - EVENING. 63

Merrin stands STARING AT THE FACELESS CENTRAL IMAGE ABOVE THE ALTAR FIXEDLY;

Then he HEARS FRANCIS'S CALLING VOICE, and heads up.

CUT TO:

64 INT. THE CHURCH - EVENING. 64

Francis looks slightly askance at Merrin as the latter comes up. For his part, Merrin looks stunned at the sight of the others.

Cheche speaks, very meekly:

CHECHE
Baba...

MERRIN
What -- what are you doing here, Father? What could possibly make you think --

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED: 64

FRANCIS
(good-naturedly)
Well, it is a church, Merrin -- and the child wished it.

RACHEL
He seems to think that this is where you live.

CHECHE
Baba's... house...

FRANCIS
I also remembered seeing a baptismal font in one nave --

Francis moves into one recess of the church and finds a beautiful MARBLE FONT still on its stand.

FRANCIS
-- and I've supplied holy water.

The priest holds up A WATER SKIN and then approaches Merrin again, his manner still accomodating.

FRANCIS
Would you -- would you consider assisting me, Merrin? It would mean a great deal to the boy --

MERRIN
No.

Cheche looks downcast; Rachel is shocked at the harshness of Merrin's tone.

MERRIN
I'm -- sorry. To you all. But something such as this -- everyone present should be sure in their hearts that it's right. And I -- can't be.
(moving to go)
I'll leave you --

As Merrin is about to exit, Cheche says earnestly:

CHECHE
Baba -- not help -- Cheche -- ?

Merrin, clearly torn, continues out.

64 CONTINUED: 64

MERRIN
I'm sorry...

CUT TO:

65 EXT. THE BRITISH CAMP - NIGHTFALL. 65

Several SOLDIERS gather around the Sergeant-Major as they begin to hear:

THE SAME CHANTING ECHOING UP FROM THE TURKANA VILLAGE.

SOLDIER
(nervously)
'Ere -- whatcha make a that, Sarge?

SERGEANT-MAJOR
I don't know... but I hope for their heathen sakes that they ain't spoilin' for trouble...

CUT TO:

66 EXT. THE CAVE SITE - NIGHTFALL. 66

Merrin emerges with Chuma, and they begin to head up the hill toward the high plain. Then they HEAR:

THE SAME CHANTING: VERY FAINT, BUT GROWING STRONGER.

MERRIN
What is it, Chuma?

CHUMA
It is bad, Merrin. A song for battle.

Merrin and Chuma exchange another look and then hustle back down the hill.

CUT TO:

67 VARIOUS ANGLES - NIGHT. 67

In QUICK CUTS WE SEE BRIEF SHOTS OF:

FRANCIS INSIDE THE CHURCH, filling the font as Rachel wraps Cheche in a white sheet;

Merrin standing with Chuma outside the church as TWO LORRIES FULL OF BRITISH SOLDIERS ARRIVE AND TAKE UP POSITIONS OUTSIDE THE CAVE, facing the road to town;

67 CONTINUED: 67

TURKANA TRIBESMEN JOGGING UP THE ROAD TO THE CAVE, still CHANTING and HOLDING THEIR WEAPONS ALOFT.

CUT TO:

68 INT. THE CHURCH - NIGHT. 68

Francis has donned a white surplice and purple stole over his black cassock, and is praying by the font.

Rachel is holding Cheche: BUT NOW SHE LOOKS VERY WORRIED AND IS HOLDING THE BOY'S FOREHEAD.

RACHEL
Father Francis!
(as Francis rushes over)
He's broken out in some sort of a fever.

FRANCIS
(feeling Cheche's head)
My God, he's burning up. Why?

RACHEL
It's been a long time since I had any real explanation for this boy's physical condition, Father. It could be hysterical, I suppose -- but I must get him back --

FRANCIS
I can be quick, Doctor -- and it may ease his mind. Come...

They move toward the font.

CUT TO:

69 EXT. OUTSIDE THE CAVE - NIGHT. 69

The BRITISH TROOPS are in position, their WEAPONS TRAINED on the road leading to town. Merrin and Chuma stand behind them, listening along with the soldiers to the CONTINUED AND NOW ALMOST DEAFENING CHANTING OF THE TURKANA. Then, with frightening suddenness:

THE CHANTING STOPS. The soldiers look very confused, and the Sergeant-Major rushes up to Chuma and Merrin.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
What does it mean, sir? Have they gone?

MERRIN
Chuma?

69 CONTINUED: 69

CHUMA
No. It means they are close. Very close. We should --

And then A SINGLE SCREAM RIPS THROUGH THE DARK STILLNESS, AS:

A LONE TURKANA WARRIOR APPEARS, RUSHING UP FROM BEHIND THE BRITISH LINE AND HURLING HIS SPEAR INTO ONE SOLDIER BEFORE THE SERGEANT-MAJOR CAN SHOOT HIM DEAD.

THE CHANTING THEN BEGINS AGAIN, LOUDER THIS TIME.

CUT TO:

70 INT. THE CHURCH - NIGHT. 70

Rachel and Francis turn at the SOUND OF THE GUNSHOT; Francis attempts composure.

FRANCIS
Will you hold the child's head over the font, please, Doctor?

Rachel is about to comply, when she LOOKS DOWN AT CHECHE AND SEES SOMETHING:

RACHEL
Father -- look!

Rachel points to SEVERAL REMAINING SCARS ON CHECHE'S FACE AND NECK:

THEY ARE SPONTANEOUSLY HEALING; AND THEN:

CHECHE'S EYES ROLL OPEN -- BUT THEY ARE NOT HIS EYES:

THEY ARE THE YELLOW, DIAMOND-PUPILED EYES OF A SERPENT.

Rachel takes in a quick gasp, and Francis, too, is clearly frightened; but he presses on:

FRANCIS
Quickly, Doctor!

Rachel moves Cheche's head over the font, and Francis fills a small cup with holy water;

HE DIPS HIS FINGER IN IT, AND MOVES TO TOUCH CHECHE'S HEAD; BUT AS THE FIRST DROP FALLS ONTO THE BOY'S SKIN:

CHECHE HOWLS IN PAIN -- THE SAME CHILD'S/MAN'S/CREATURE'S VOICE WE HEARD BEFORE. HE GIVES FRANCIS A LETHAL LOOK, AND THEN:

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: 70

WITH A SINGLE SWIFT MOVEMENT OF HIS ARMS HE KNOCKS BOTH RACHEL AND FRANCIS ACROSS THE ROOM.

HE STARES AT FRANCIS.

CHECHE
I'VE WARNED YOU ABOUT THAT, PRIEST!

Cheche then STANDS UP STRAIGHT, TEARS THE SHEET FROM HIS BODY AND STRETCHES LUXURIANTLY, LIKE A SLEEK ANIMAL, HOWLING AGAIN;

Rachel gathers herself enough to see him do this, and notices:

THAT HIS BODY IS NOW MORE THAN HEALED -- IT IS POWERFUL, EVEN BEAUTIFUL.

CUT TO:

71 EXT. THE CAVE - NIGHT. 71

Merrin, Chuma and the Sergeant stand at the center of a SQUARE FORMATION into which the soldiers have regrouped;

THE TURKANA CONTINUE TO CHANT OUT OF THE DARKNESS;

Then a SOLDIER calls out:

SOLDIER
Here they come!

As if materializing from the air itself, the TURKANA EMERGE FROM THE DARKNESS, BEATING THEIR WEAPONS AGAINST THEIR HIDE SHIELDS AND STILL CHANTING.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
All right, men -- pick your shots carefully! Front rank --

MERRIN
Wait, Sergeant -- they've stopped!

And in fact THE TURKANA HAVE HALTED THEIR ADVANCE, some twenty-five yards from the British soldiers.

Sebituana steps forward, and, after ordering an END to the CHANTING, BEGINS TO CALL OUT [NO SUBTITLES] TO THE SOLDIERS.

CHUMA
Sebituana says that his warriors do not wish to fight.

71 CONTINUED:

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Well, they ain't dressed for dancin', Chuma -- what does he want, then?

CHUMA
For the church to be buried again -- that, and --

MERRIN
(off Chuma's hesitation)
And?

CHUMA
They say that Father Francis brought the Christian evil and the soldiers. He must die -- and so must the boy.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Of all the bloody -- anybody <u>else</u> he wants?

MERRIN
Why the boy?

CHUMA
He alone has drawn strength from all the evil that has happened. It is more proof that he is cursed, and so Sebituana wants them both. He will spare the rest of us.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Will he, now? Well, Chuma, you just tell him and his friends to turn around and go back where they come from, and <u>we'll</u> be the ones doin' the sparing.

CHUMA
They will not.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
They bloody well will, once they've had a taste of it -- front rank, ready! Take aim!

MERRIN
No, Sergeant!

SERGEANT-MAJOR
FIRE!

The British rifles CRACKLE, AND SEVERAL TURKANA FALL.

CUT TO:

72 INT. THE CHURCH - NIGHT. 72

Cheche stands over Francis, now, smiling triumphantly and LOOKING MORE EVIL AND POWERFUL THAN EVER.

CHECHE
You ridiculous little man...

Suddenly Cheche SEIZES FRANCIS BY THE COLLAR AND PULLS HIM FIRST TO HIS FEET AND THEN UP INTO THE AIR.

Rachel is too stunned to move or make a sound.

CHECHE
You had no idea what you were toying with, did you? Your friend Merrin had the sense to leave -- but then he always <u>has</u> been a coward.

FRANCIS
Satan -- get thee behind me...

CHECHE
Yes, you priests <u>do</u> have a taste for that, don't you? And ordinarily I would oblige, but --

Cheche THROWS FRANCIS ACROSS THE CAVE, toward the ENTRANCE.

CHECHE
-- this evening I've got my eye on the lovely Doctor, there.

FRANCIS
No...

Francis moves toward the mouth of the cave.

FRANCIS
I won't allow this!

Cheche laughs and watches Francis stumble quickly out of the cave.

CHECHE
Yes, go, Father -- go and meet the fate I've prepared for you! And be grateful -- YOU'RE GOING TO BE A MARTYR!

Cheche continues his HELLISH LAUGH AS FRANCIS MOVES ON AND OUT OF THE CAVE.

CUT TO:

73 EXT. OUTSIDE THE CAVE - NIGHT. 73

The Turkana have become only MORE ENRAGED BY THE SIGHT OF THEIR OWN DEAD, although THEY ARE NOT ADVANCING. Merrin has hold of the Sergeant-Major's arm.

MERRIN
Sergeant, listen to me --

SERGEANT-MAJOR
I'm a bit busy just now, sir, trying to save all our skins! Rear rank, prepare --

Chuma suddenly lifts an arm, pointing.

CHUMA
Look!

The Sergeant-Major and Merrin, along with the rest of the soldiers, turn to see:

FRANCIS RUNNING TOWARD THEM. He races up to Merrin, clearly unbalanced and desperate.

MERRIN
Father! Where are Rachel and Cheche --

FRANCIS
No time, Merrin -- I must get back -- !

Before Merrin can stop him Francis BREAKS AWAY FROM HIM AND THROUGH THE LINE OF SOLDIERS, RUNNING TOWARD TOWN.

MERRIN
Father Francis! Come back, the Turkana are out there --

Merrin tries to follow Francis, but the Sergeant-Major stops him.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
No! Mr. Merrin, sir, no --

MERRIN
But they'll kill him!

SERGEANT-MAJOR
And you too, sir, if you follow!

From the darkness come NEW, EVEN LOUDER CRIES FROM THE TURKANA;

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: 73

Merrin strains against the Sergeant-Major's grip, but not enough to break free. He stares into the night desperately;

Then he turns toward THE CAVE, and the Sergeant-Major releases him so that he can take a few steps in that direction;

Merrin's eyes fix on the cave;

CUT TO:

74 INT. THE CHURCH - NIGHT. 74

Still smiling, Cheche CLOSES HIS EYES AND HOLDS UP A HAND.

CHECHE
Not yet, Merrin -- but soon...

CUT TO:

75 EXT. THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE - NIGHT. 75

Just as Merrin reaches the mouth of the cave, A HAIL OF BOULDERS COLLAPSE TO BLOCK HIS WAY.

CUT TO:

76 INT. THE CHURCH - NIGHT. 76

Seemingly satisfied, Cheche smiles, opens his eyes, and then slowly, even langorously, approaches Rachel and leans down in front of her.

She remains transfixed as HE TOUCHES HER FACE, THEN TAKES HER HAND AND BEGINS TO MOVE IT ACROSS HIS GLISTENING BODY.

Rachel can just manage to say:

RACHEL
What -- <u>are</u> you...?

CHECHE
I am perfection -- and you cannot resist me...

At which Cheche TOUCHES RACHEL'S FACE WITH BOTH HANDS, and she begins to involuntarily MOAN WITH MESMERIZED PLEASURE.

DISSOLVE TO:

77 EXT. THE CAVE - NIGHT. 77

It is several hours later -- DAWN IS JUST BEGINNING TO SHOW OVER THE EASTERN HORIZON.

The British soldiers remain in their square; though some are dozing;

The Sergeant-Major, Merrin and Chuma continue to carefully watch the ground before them -- but there seems to be NO SIGN OF THE TURKANA.

MERRIN
How long has it been?

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Hours -- it's nearly dawn. Do you think they're gone, Chuma?

CHUMA
(considering it)
It is possible -- they have at least one part of what they wanted.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Well -- we can't stay here forever...

The Sergeant-Major begins to shake the other soldiers.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
All right boys -- let's move out, now. Carefully and quietly...

The soldiers comply, advancing into the darkness with their weapons ready. The Sergeant-Major, Merrin and Chuma follow.

As they continue on, the hear the sudden, terrifying SOUND of a horrified SOLDIER'S VOICE:

HORRIFIED SOLDIER
Sergeant-Major! Come quick, Sergeant, the priest -- Good Christ...!

Merrin leads the other two ONWARD INTO THE DARKNESS, UNTIL THEY AND THE OTHER SOLDIERS COME UPON:

First, the horrified soldier, who is on the ground and holding his stomach, his face a blank mask;

And next, the cause of this reaction -- FRANCIS:

77 CONTINUED: 77

ONE LARGE SPEAR HAS BEEN DRIVEN INTO THE GROUND AND FRANCIS IS BOUND TO IT, HANDS BEHIND HIS BACK -- HIS FEET ARE ALSO BOUND;

HE HAS BEEN STRIPPED OF ALL CLOTHES SAVE A LOINCLOTH;

AND HIS BODY IS RIDDLED WITH SMALL TURKANA HUNTING ARROWS;

YET MIRACULOUSLY, HE IS STILL ALIVE, THOUGH BARELY -- AND CLEARLY HE WILL NOT LAST MUCH LONGER.

Merrin rushes to him as the soldiers untie him.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Gently, boys, gently -- try to lay him down --

SOLDIER
We -- we can't, Sergeant, the arrows -- they're <u>everywhere</u>...

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Snap them at the base -- enough to get him on his back --

One of the SOLDIERS complies, and Francis MOANS PITIFULLY.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Be careful, damn you!

MERRIN
(as they get Francis onto the ground)
Why, Father? Why did you --

FRANCIS
No -- time -- Merrin... It is him... He is in the boy... he has Rachel...

MERRIN
Who?

FRANCIS
...he was perfect... the most perfect... of all the angels...

SERGEANT-MAJOR
We should try to keep him quiet, Mr. Merrin. Those bloody savages...

FRANCIS
No, Merrin -- it was not the Turkana... Merrin?!

77 CONTINUED:

MERRIN
I'm here, Father.

FRANCIS
For me, Merrin -- the last rites -- help me...

MERRIN
But -- but you need --

FRANCIS
A priest -- yes -- you. I know it is real, now, Merrin -- do not condemn me to eternal damnation!

MERRIN
But, Father -- you know I can't --

FRANCIS
You can -- you must! I beg of you -- it is true, without your help I will suffer the tortures of Hell!

MERRIN
All right -- all right, just be still, Father. I have no Bible --

SERGEANT-MAJOR
I have one, sir, in the lorry -- Private! Fetch my bible from under the seat -- move, boy!

One of the SOLDIERS dashes off.

FRANCIS
You must -- in my room, Merrin -- the book of Roman Rituals -- you must study it --

MERRIN
Which, Father?

FRANCIS
(locking eyes)
The ritual -- of exorcism...

Merrin receives this news like a blow.

FRANCIS
You must, Father... He is here -- in the boy --
(suddenly frantic)
(MORE)

77 CONTINUED: 77

FRANCIS (cont'd)
Why -- will you not give me -- the rites, Merrin?

MERRIN
Just hold on a moment longer, Father --
(to the Sergeant)
For God's sake, tell your man to hurry!

FRANCIS
For one of us -- a priest, to die -- without --
(weeping)
I failed, Merrin -- you -- must not...

And with that FRANCIS DIES -- JUST AS THE SOLDIER APPEARS WITH THE BIBLE. Merrin continues to cradle Francis.

DISSOLVE TO:

78 EXT. THE CAVE - DAWN. 78

With Merrin's and Chuma's help and supervision, ONE GROUP OF SOLDIERS IS TRYING TO CLEAR THE STONES AWAY FROM THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE, WHILE ANOTHER SMALLER GROUP PATROLS THE PERIMETER OF THE AREA. The men work hard with picks and shovels, but can make no progress.

After a few seconds one SOLDIER throws down the PICK he's wielding.

SOLDIER
Damn it all -- I've never seen rock like this, we'll have to <u>blast</u> our way through!

MERRIN
Easy, son -- remember that there are two people in there, hopefully alive. We've got to keep at it, that's all.

But Merrin then exchanges a LOOK with Chuma that betrays both men's knowledge that something very strange is going on.

CUT TO:

79 EXT. A SHADY PART OF THE HILLSIDE - DAWN. 79

Merrin and the Sergeant-Major approach a shaded spot near the hillside, where several SOLDIERS on burial detail have PILED STONES ATOP FRANCIS'S GRAVE AND SUNK A WOODEN CROSS INTO THE GROUND. The soldiers stand with their caps in their hands as Merrin arrives and takes up his position at the foot of the grave.

79 CONTINUED: 79

One of the men offers Merrin THE SAME BIBLE we saw earlier; Merrin ACCEPTS IT UNEASILY, AND BEGINS TO SPEAK IN A SIMILAR FASHION:

MERRIN
Well, then -- let us -- let us...

One of the MEN looks to him, confused.

SOLDIER
Pray, sir?

MERRIN
(startled)
Yes, private. Let us -- pray...
(awkwardly)
Lord -- please accept this, your servant --
(a beat; then, to the Sergeant-Major)
I -- I never knew his Christian name.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
I believe it was William, sir. Seen it on his travel permit.

MERRIN
(another pause; then)
This, your servant, William Francis. Forgive the -- omissions of his death, for the sin was not his...
(suddenly bitter)
Any more than were the sins of the others who have died here...

SOLDIER
Father?

MERRIN
Don't call me that, private.
(continuing)
Or than were the sins of still others, countless others who have perished desiring nothing more than an ounce of mercy or understanding from you, but whose prayers have fallen on deaf ears --

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Mr. Merrin, sir, this don't seem right --

MERRIN
No, Sergeant-Major!
(glancing at the bible,
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED: 79

MERRIN (cont'd)
fuming)
No, it does not...

And with that MERRIN HURLS THE BIBLE TO THE GROUND AND STORMS AWAY. He hasn't gotten very far, however, before he hears A SOLDIER'S VOICE COMING FROM THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE:

SOLDIER
Look out -- the stones are shifting, look out!

Merrin and the soldiers rush back to the mouth of the cave, where:

THE SEEMINGLY IMMOVABLE STONES BLOCKING THE ENTRANCE HAVE FALLEN AWAY, REVEALING A MAN-SIZED OPENING.

Merrin rushes to Chuma, who lies on his back coughing in the settling DUST.

MERRIN
Chuma! Are you hurt?!

CHUMA
No -- not hurt -- but -- I do not understand, Merrin. It was nothing we did, the stones simply -- moved...

The Sergeant-Major joins them.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
My men seem to be all right -- what about you, Chuma?

MERRIN
(as Chuma keeps coughing)
Get him some water, will you, Sergeant --

Both men TURN SUDDENLY AT THE SOUND OF TERRIBLE SCREAMING:

ONE SOLDIER IS STUMBLING BACK FROM THE CAVE ENTRANCE, MADLY CLUTCHING AT HIS BACK, FROM WHICH ACRID SMOKE RISES;

Merrin, the Sergeant-Major and OTHER SOLDIERS RUN TO THE MAN'S AID, TRYING TO REMOVE HIS SHIRT: BUT AS THEY DO THE MAN ONLY SCREAMS LOUDER.

MERRIN
He's been burned -- badly.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Yes, but by what? It's a strange pattern -
- what were you doing, son?

79 CONTINUED: 79

SOLDIER
I tried to go in -- but as soon as I got halfway through -- Christ, it feels like acid on me skin, haven't you got any water?!

The Sergeant-Major begins to carefully pour water from his canteen onto the man's skin, and then the other soldiers finally get his shirt off; they all gasp a bit when they see:

THAT HIS ENTIRE BACK IS COVERED IN TERRIBLE, BLISTERED BURNS THAT HAVE SCORED HIS FLESH RIGHT DOWN TO THE BACK OF HIS RIBS. BUT WHAT IS PERHAPS EVEN MORE HORRIFYING IS:

THAT THE BURNS FORM A MESSAGE -- A SINGLE WORD:

"MERRIN"

MERRIN
It would appear that I'm meant to go in. Alone...

Merrin slowly approaches the mouth of the cave, and as he does Chuma catches his arm.

CHUMA
Father Francis -- Sebituana -- <u>both</u> could have been right about the boy.

MERRIN
Yes.
(taking Chuma's hand away)
Do <u>not</u> follow me, Chuma...

Chuma watches grimly as Merrin ENTERS THE CAVE WITHOUT DIFFICULTY.

CUT TO:

80 INT. THE CHURCH - DAY. 80

A LONE TORCH lights the chamber eerily.

Merrin enters cautiously, but THE ROOM IS EMPTY;

The next thing he notices is the SOUND OF DEEP, RESONANT BREATHING, ALONG WITH AN OCCASIONAL CHUCKLE IN THE VOICE THAT WE LAST HEARD COME OUT OF CHECHE. IT ECHOES UP FROM THE TEMPLE BELOW; and the SOUND is punctuated by THE OCCASIONAL MOANING OF A WOMAN.

80 CONTINUED: 80

MERRIN DESCENDS.

CUT TO:

81 INT. THE TEMPLE UNDER THE CHURCH - DAY. 81

A FLAME IN A BRONZE BRAZIER makes this room seem even more bizarre than it looked earlier.

The first thing Merrin sees is:

Rachel, AGAINST ONE WALL, HER WRISTS SHACKLED, BRUISED AND BLEEDING. She's NAKED SAVE FOR THE SHEET THAT SHE EARLIER WRAPPED AROUND CHECHE, a torn piece of which barely covers her torso. Her eyes roll aimlessly in her head and she continues to moan, as if she's been drugged.

Merrin runs directly to her and tries to undo her hands; as he does she becomes VERY FEARFUL AND AGITATED, AND LOOKS AT HIM WITHOUT RECOGNIZING HIM.

RACHEL
Please -- let me live -- you can take my body, use it any way you want, but let me live --

MERRIN
Rachel, it's all right, it's only me --

Merrin suddenly STOPS TRYING TO HELP RACHEL AND SPINS ROUND WHEN THE ROOM FILLS WITH THUNDEROUS LAUGHTER: CHECHE'S SAME VOICE. After searching for a few seconds Merrin SEES:

CHECHE, RECLINING LUXURIANTLY, ALSO NAKED SAVE FOR A BIT OF THE SHEET WRAPPED AROUND HIS WAIST.

THE YOUTH LOOKS MORE PERFECT AND POWERFUL THAN EVER, THOUGH HIS EYES REMAIN A HYPNOTIC SERPENT'S AND HIS LAUGH IS DEMONIC. In addition:

HE IS FLOATING IN MID-AIR, SEVERAL FEET ABOVE THE ALTAR.

CHECHE
You didn't know your beloved Doctor was a whore, did you, Merrin?

Afraid but transfixed, MERRIN APPROACHES THE ALTAR.

CHECHE
That was how she stayed alive in the death camp -- common whoring. She never lifted a finger to help the other prisoners -- simply traded her body for
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: 81

CHECHE (cont'd)
food, and to avoid the ovens. I think she even began to enjoy it, after a time...

MERRIN
Who are you?

CHECHE
Haven't you guessed?

MERRIN
Are you the being to whom this temple was built?

CHECHE
(frowning, looking around)
Disgusting, isn't it? I took great delight in making them suffer for their presumption. As if torturing animals and children could impress me.

MERRIN
So Francis was right -- you're some sort of demon, possessing the boy.

CHECHE
NO, THAT IS WRONG!

With an angry flick of his wrist Cheche SENDS MERRIN HURTLING AT FANTASTIC SPEED INTO THE WALL BEHIND HIM.

As Merrin struggles to his hands and knees, Cheche FLOATS TOWARD HIM.

CHECHE
Pay attention, Merrin. Francis did not mention any "demon," did he?

MERRIN
(catching his breath)
He said -- inside the boy --

CHECHE
And who did he say was inside the boy?
(off Merrin's wide-eyed amazement)
Yes...

MERRIN
The most perfect of all the angels...

CHECHE
Did I not roll away the stones for you, Merrin? I thought you'd appreciate the irony -- and the consideration. I wanted
(MORE)

81 CONTINUED: 81

CHECHE (cont'd)
you to know that -- in my eyes, at least -- you are every bit as worthy as that whining, crucified impostor you once worshipped.
(touching Merrin's face)
But your father has not forsaken you...

MERRIN
Satan...

CHECHE
I have many names... I trust you were gratified by the manner of your friend Francis's death?

MERRIN
Your mockery has been everywhere. The head on a plate, the inverted crucifixion, the thirty pieces of silver --

CHECHE/SATAN
(laughing)
All messages to you, Merrin -- although it's taken a long time for you to answer.

MERRIN
I have not answered -- you forced me here --

CHECHE/SATAN
Fool -- your heart is as open to me as it is to my Father, remember. I saw you hurl that moronic text into the dust, and heard you curse God in your heart.

MERRIN
You call Him your Father?

CHECHE/SATAN
Of course. I sat at His right hand long before that bastard Jew.

MERRIN
But you were cast aside. For challenging Him -- for the sin of pride --

CHECHE/SATAN
DO NOT PRESUME TO JUDGE ME!

81 CONTINUED: 81

MERRIN
What is it you want of us? To join your legion in this world -- ?

CHECHE/SATAN
(laughing again)
You all did <u>that</u> long ago! I no longer even <u>need</u> such creatures as these --

Cheche/Satan INDICATES THE IMAGES OF HORRIBLE DEMONS ON THE WALL RELIEFS; AND THEN:

SEVERAL OF THE IMAGES COME TO THREE-DIMENSIONAL LIFE. THEY MOVE, MAKING HIDEOUS SOUNDS OF LUST AND VIOLENCE, TOWARD RACHEL AND BEGIN TO FONDLE HER BODY; SHE REMAINS BARELY CONSCIOUS.

CHECHE/SATAN
Oh, yes, when this world was young, when there was a <u>hope</u> that God's virtue might triumph in the hearts of men, such ugliness was necessary. But now?

CHECHE/SATAN PASSES A HAND AND THE DEMONS BECOME STONE AGAIN, SHRINKING BACK INTO THEIR TWO-DIMENSIONAL FORMS ON THE WALLS.

CHECHE/SATAN
Such efforts are no longer necessary. And I am pleased, for in truth I love beauty as much as God does...

Cheche/Satan approaches Rachel and begins to RUN HIS HANDS OVER HER.

CHECHE/SATAN
I simply have other uses for it...
(to Merrin, smiling)
Don't worry -- I haven't taken her. Yet. Out of consideration for you.

MERRIN
Me?

CHECHE/SATAN
I see into your heart, remember? And what I see there is a picture of desire, a picture that bears this woman's face and form. And you shall have her.

MERRIN
I ask again -- what do you want of us?

81 CONTINUED: 81

CHECHE/SATAN
I want nothing of you, Merrin. I want only to give...
(approaching Merrin again)
My legion on earth no longer need wear the masks of monsters -- for there is now no greater monstrosity than the soul of man. Consider all the pain and suffering in this little village, Merrin, this place that is so like another you once knew... Has it all been my doing, do you imagine?
(his voice becoming Merrin's)
"You don't have to look further than the fears and ambitions of every human being involved in this situation to understand what 'evil' is at work."
(his voice again)
Your own words, Merrin. Well and truly spoken. Oh, certainly, in the crudest of situations I will still stoop to my old ways --

Cheche/Satan SPINS HIS HEAD VICIOUSLY TOWARD RACHEL AND:

SHE IMMEDIATELY CHANGES VIOLENTLY: HER BODY BEGINS TO SPASM TERRIBLY, HER EYES GO WHITE, HER SKIN DRIES AND SHE SCREAMS TO MERRIN IN A HORRIFYING VOICE:

RACHEL
WHERE ARE YOUR BALLS, MERRIN?! SHRIVELED UP BY LOVING JESUS, SHRUNK TO NOTHING WHEN CHRIST MADE YOU KISS HIS ASS?! YOU COULDN'T JUST TAKE ME, COULDN'T MAKE MY BLOOD BURN BY SHOVING YOURSELF INTO EVERY HOLE IN MY BODY -- AND SO I HAD TO LET THE DEVIL SUCK AT MY SEX, AND WHEN HE DID I PRAYED TO GOD TO LET HIM SUCK ME MORE, WHILE I CURSED YOUR WEAKNESS --

Rachel SUDDENLY SENDS A COLUMN OF BLOODY, MAGGOT-RIDDEN PROJECTILE VOMIT IN MERRIN'S DIRECTION, WHICH HE DODGES IN HORROR; then she SCREAMS INCOHERENTLY again until CHECHE/SATAN LIFTS A FINGER TOWARD HER WEARILY.

CHECHE/SATAN
Enough...

Rachel grows calm again, although the experience has clearly taken a toll on her.

81 CONTINUED:

CHECHE/SATAN
Unpleasant, isn't it? I know -- let's punish her as your church would.

Cheche/Satan again raises a hand, and SUDDENLY RACHEL IS ENGULFED FROM BELOW IN FLAME, AS IF SHE WERE BURNING AT THE STAKE. AS HER FLESH BEGINS TO BLISTER AND IGNITE SHE LOOKS TO MERRIN:

RACHEL
PLEASE! PLEASE, THE PAIN, OH GOD, PLEASE KILL ME!

MERRIN
Stop it! Do not torment her, if it's me you want!

CHECHE/SATAN
But she has blasphemed, Merrin -- and so colorfully! Your church would scourge the demon from her soul.

MERRIN
Stop it, I say!

Cheche/Satan shrugs nonchalantly and lifts a finger, and the FLAMES DISAPPEAR, LEAVING RACHEL INTACT BUT FURTHER EXHAUSTED.

MERRIN
Illusions -- you torment us with illusions...

CHECHE/SATAN
I fear not. She feels what you see when it happens, I assure you.

MERRIN
But only God -- and Christ....

CHECHE/SATAN
Can what? Work miracles? Do not delude yourself, Merrin. Miracles are mine to perform as much as my Father's. And Jesus? Miracles?
(a laugh)
I'll tell you something, my own son --

Cheche/Satan goes to Rachel and examines her.

CHECHE/SATAN
I knew Jesus. He was a good man. A compassionate and wise man. But miracles?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: 81

CHECHE/SATAN (cont'd)
Miracles are for gods, not self-proclaimed prophets.

Cheche/Satan begins to delicately LICK RACHEL'S SKIN.

MERRIN
(turning away)
No -- Christ healed the sick -- gave life to the dead --

CHECHE/SATAN
Yes, yes, and turned water to wine. Actually --
(smiling to Merrin)
I did all that.

MERRIN
You? Why?

CHECHE/SATAN
To spread the faith! It was easy to see what evil would be done in Christ's name, after all...
(nodding approvingly)
Good. Her flesh is intact. I want her to be pure when you have her -- again, out of consideration. For yours is a marvelous example, Merrin. A man of God who has forsaken God? There is nothing sweeter to me...

MERRIN
I did not forsake Him -- He abandoned me!

CHECHE/SATAN
Yes -- and left you to wander, lost, until you found me. And I can offer you solace -- in this life, and for eternity.

MERRIN
No -- no! Whatever my feelings about God, you can't buy my devotion with the kind of meaningless --

CHECHE/SATAN
Oh, Merrin, don't insult us both -- I know that. When I say "solace" to you, I do not refer to such pleasures of the flesh and riches of the world as would satisfy ordinary men.
(crouching by Merrin, touching his face)
You deny yourself pleasure or comfort of any kind. You punish yourself for God's

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: 81

CHECHE/SATAN (cont'd)
cruelties -- not with the lash, like some perverse monk, but with a far sharper pain. The pain -- of conscience...
(whispering in his ear)
I can take that away... And then, at last, you will be able to let the guilt rest where it belongs. With God...

Cheche/Satan has touched a nerve deeper than any so far, and he reads as much in Merrin's eyes.

CHECHE/SATAN
Yes -- you see it, don't you? It is I who offer true mercy, not my Father...

MERRIN
(shaking his head)
Your most powerful weapon is confusion -- that's been known for a long time --

CHECHE/SATAN
Are you confused?

MERRIN
I know this much -- you were there that day. In my village. God may not have been, but I've never seen clearer proof of what you are than that -- and it has nothing to do with mercy!

CHECHE/SATAN
But God was there, Merrin -- for if He is at all, then He must be everywhere. It is for His presence, not His absence, that you should curse Him.

MERRIN
I -- do not -- curse him...

CHECHE/SATAN
LIAR!

Again the WALLS AROUND MERRIN COME TO LIFE, THIS TIME EXTENDING HIDEOUS ARMS THAT GRAB HIM, SLAM HIM BACK PAINFULLY AND HOLD HIM IN PLACE.

CHECHE/SATAN
SHOW ME YOUR LIAR'S HEART, MERRIN!

Merrin SCREAMS IN PAIN AS FIRST HIS SHIRT AND THEN THE VERY FLESH OF HIS CHEST TEARS OPEN. HIS RIBS CRACK AND THEN HE LOOKS DOWN IN HORROR TO SEE HIS OWN HEART, EXPOSED AND BEATING.

81 CONTINUED: 81

CHECHE/SATAN
You have cursed God every day -- cursed him for failing you and your flock! In that heart of yours you hate God, Merrin --

Just as suddenly as they were torn open, MERRIN'S CHEST AND CLOTHES CLOSE BACK UP. The ARMS IN THE WALLS RETREAT INTO THEIR STONE FORM, and Cheche/Satan's attitude becomes more conciliatory.

CHECHE/SATAN
And why not? For it was God that made you feel such guilt, and makes you feel it still. And that feeling will eventually become unbearable, Merrin, until one day you, like your friend Captain Granville, will take your own life. And God will only damn you further for doing so. You cannot change mankind, you cannot change God, and you cannot restore your faith in and love for Him. But there is one thing you can do, with my help.

MERRIN
(recovering)
What -- what is it?

CHECHE/SATAN
(whispering in his ear)
You can cease to care -- about all of it.

Merrin looks up slowly, ambiguously: he wasn't expecting this.

CHECHE/SATAN
You see my affection for you? Go on, Merrin -- explore these ruins that fascinate you, love this woman that intrigues you, enjoy the purest and simplest of joys. And when you see or hear of an innocent's death, a village destroyed, a people exterminated, you will feel no responsibility, no loss, no pain. You will simply go on, to enjoy the next moment of contentment -- contentment given to you not by God -- but by me...

MERRIN
Why -- why should you do this -- for me?

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: 81

CHECHE/SATAN
I've told you -- there are few so noble as the man of God who will rise up to call that tyrant by his right names: Tormentor -- Manipulator -- Pervert! You fill me with admiration and affection -- I would have you by my side, to be one of the rulers of my Dominion.

MERRIN
(still dazed)
And -- my soul -- would be damned...

CHECHE/SATAN
No -- your soul would be free.

MERRIN
And if I refuse?

CHECHE/SATAN
But why would you? Your faith is already gone, Merrin -- let guilt and torment go with it. And ease the suffering of this woman -- as well as this boy I inhabit.

MERRIN
The boy...?

CHECHE/SATAN
If you come to me, he will follow, certainly, for he loves you truly. And I am his only hope, after all -- should I leave him...

Suddenly CHECHE'S EYES BECOME HIS OWN AGAIN: HIS BODY FALLS TO THE GROUND PAINFULLY, AND WHEN HE CRIES OUT IT IS IN HIS OWN VOICE, FEARFUL AND CONFUSED:

CHECHE
Baba...?

And then comes the SOUND of a SICKENING CRACK -- THE CRACK OF A HUMAN BONE;

CHECHE SHRIEKS IN AGONY AND CLUTCHES AT HIS FORMERLY CRIPPLED LEG:

THE LEG IS TWISTING AND DEFORMING HORRIBLY AGAIN. THE BOY CONTINUES TO CRY OUT:

CHECHE
Baba -- help! Help Cheche, Baba, please!

81 CONTINUED: 81

Merrin rushes to Cheche and cradles him in his arms.

MERRIN
Stop it -- STOP IT, I BEG OF YOU!

And just as quickly as they changed before, CHECHE'S EYES AGAIN BECOME THOSE OF SATAN:

He looks up at Merrin and SMILES, CLEARLY ENJOYING THE STRANGE INTIMACY OF THE SITUATION, WHICH CONFUSES MERRIN.

CHECHE/SATAN
There is no need to beg, Merrin. Witness my mercy...

Feeling movement against his own body, Merrin LOOKS DOWN TO SEE CHECHE/SATAN'S LEG STRAIGHTEN AND BECOME PERFECT AGAIN.

MERRIN
No -- this is not real -- this is possession!

CHECHE/SATAN
It is <u>both</u>. For possession can be perfection, Merrin, as you shall discover if -- <u>when</u> -- you give your heart to me...

Merrin hustles to his feet, repelled; and again, CHECHE/SATAN RISES TO HOVER ABOVE THE FLOOR OF THE TEMPLE

CHECHE/SATAN
If you do not -- the boy shall know the life he had before. So shall you.
(studying Merrin)
Can you truly hesitate? Perhaps you forget how bitter is the curse of unrewarded conscience that God has laid upon you -- yes, perhaps you need to be reminded. Well, then...

Merrin turns SUDDENLY when he hears:

THE SOUND OF GUNFIRE ECHOING DOWN FROM ABOVE AND OUTSIDE, as well as the SHOUTING, SCREAMING VOICES OF BOTH BRITISH SOLDIERS AND TURKANA WARRIORS.

Merrin's face fills with horror.

MERRIN
Hasn't this village endured enough -- even for you?

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

CHECHE/SATAN
It's not my doing, Merrin. Such is simply the way of the world that God and Man have made. But if you still feel compassion, then go -- go and see if it gains you anything more than it ever did.

MERRIN
And Rachel?

CHECHE/SATAN
(shrugging)
Take her, too, if you like.

At that RACHEL'S BONDS LOOSEN AND SHE CRUMPLES TO THE FLOOR. Merrin rushes to her, wrapping the clothes she wore when they entered around her as best he can.

Cheche/Satan, in the meantime, FLOATS GENTLY BACK TO RECLINE IN MID-AIR OVER THE ALTAR.

CHECHE/SATAN
Neither of you can bear much more of what awaits you out there. Of course you could run. Find some new corner of the world in which to hide -- but it would all happen again, as it happened before, as it has happened here. No, eventually you will learn acceptance -- and I shall be ready to welcome you...

Merrin hustles the groggy Rachel out of the room and up the temple steps.

CUT TO:

82 EXT. THE CAVE - TWILIGHT. 82

Merrin, still supporting Rachel, staggers out to find:

ANOTHER BATTLE IN PROGRESS. THE BRITISH TROOPS HAVE TAKEN COVER, AND ARE FIRING ON THE TURKANA, WHO ARE CHANTING AND BRANDISHING THEIR WEAPONS IN THE DISTANCE.

RACHEL
Merrin...? What -- ?
(realizing where she's been)
No... no, let me die, Merrin... let me die!

MERRIN
Stop it -- Rachel, no!

82 CONTINUED:

Merrin drags her to one of the British lorries and puts her still-groggy form in the front seat. They are quickly joined by the Sergeant-Major.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Mr. Merrin, sir! We figured you for dead, right enough -- you been in there for the full day and evening. Is the Doctor all right?

RACHEL
(before Merrin can answer)
Leave me alone -- all of you...

SERGEANT-MAJOR
What does she mean, sir? Is she hurt?

MERRIN
I've got to get her back to the hospital, Sergeant-Major, she needs -- attention.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
That's no small order, sir -- the villagers have called in their cousins, you might say, and we're cut off up here. Now that you're back we can try to cut our way out --

MERRIN
No. No more fighting. No more killing, damn it, these people aren't to blame for any of this.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
(grimly)
That may be true, Mr. Merrin -- I doubt if I'm one to judge. But there's things that've happened today that might make you see it differently, sir.

MERRIN
What? What could --
(looking around, suddenly alarmed)
Where's Chuma?

SERGEANT-MAJOR
They -- surprised us. This morning. Jumped Chuma and two others, took them -- prisoner...

82 CONTINUED:

The Sergeant-Major hands Merrin a PAIR OF BINOCULARS, and indicates the TURKANA TRIBESMEN IN THE DISTANCE. Merrin fearfully looks through the binoculars and SEES:

CHUMA AND TWO BRITISH SOLDIERS, TIED (BUT NOT NAILED) TO ROUGH CROSSES IN THE MIDST OF THE TURKANA. The warriors HOLD SPEARS AND SLASH AT THE CAPTIVES, BUT THE THREE MEN ARE CLEARLY STILL ALIVE.

MERRIN
No -- Chuma, no!
(throwing the binoculars down)
Enough -- enough!

And with that Merrin begins to MARCH OFF TOWARD THE TURKANA, PAST THE BELEAGUERED BRITISH SOLDIERS WHO WATCH HIM GO IN SHOCK.

The Sergeant-Major follows him for a bit, but very reluctantly.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Mr. Merrin -- what are you doing, sir?!

MERRIN
I'm going to talk to Sebituana -- this must stop, now.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
But they'll kill you, sir!

MERRIN
No, they won't. Not when they hear what I have to say...

Merrin keeps on going, and the Sergeant-Major falls back to where Rachel sits watching.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
He's mad, Doctor -- I know they say that God watches out for fools --

RACHEL
(barely audible)
Not God, Sergeant...

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Ma'am?

82 CONTINUED: 82

RACHEL
(eyes on Merrin)
Not God...

CUT TO:

83 EXT. SEBITUANA'S WAR CAMP - NIGHT. 83

Merrin stands at the base of the cross to which Chuma is tied. Nearby is a LARGE FIRE around which are gathered SEBITUANA, THE OTHER ELDERS AND A LARGE GROUP OF WARRIORS.

Chuma and the two British soldiers are being LOWERED FROM THEIR CROSSES. As Chuma is placed on the ground by the Turkana, Merrin rushes to him gives him water from a skin.

MERRIN
Chuma! Chuma, can you hear me?

CHUMA
(drinking and nodding)
How -- Merrin -- ? What did you tell them -- ?

MERRIN
I promised them justice.

CHUMA
(smiling weakly)
Is that -- all?

MERRIN
(smiling back)
No -- but I need your help to tell them the rest. Can you manage it?

Chuma nods and, with Merrin's help, gets to his feet. They approach the fire, and the scowling Sebituana.

MERRIN
Tell him that there is a devil at work in his village, Chuma. And that it lives in the cave.

CHUMA
(after translating)
He says that he knows this.

MERRIN
Tell him I can make the devil depart. But the fighting must stop first.

83 CONTINUED:

CHUMA
(after translating)
He says that he does not need you -- he says he will kill all the white men, and that the devil will leave then, anyway.

MERRIN
Tell him that is not true -- that this is not the white man's devil, but every man's devil.

CHUMA
(after translating)
He wants to know how you will defeat this devil, if it is so powerful.

MERRIN
Tell him that I have knowledge -- but that I may fail, nonetheless. Even if I do fail, however, I promise him that the white soldiers will leave this place.

Sebituana pauses, studying Merrin, then nods and speaks.

CHUMA
He says he will give you until morning to make this happen.

MERRIN
Good. Now he must let me retrieve certain things from the town...

CUT TO:

84 INT. FRANCIS'S ROOM IN EMEKWI'S HOTEL - NIGHT. 84

Merrin BURSTS INTO WHAT WAS FATHER FRANCIS'S ROOM, SEARCHING FURIOUSLY as Emekwi stands at the door shouting:

EMEKWI
I am sorry to say it, Merrin, but it is true -- everything was well in Lodwar until Father Francis came, and now, all this destruction and sorrow...!

Merrin finally finds FRANCIS'S SUITCASE UNDER THE BED. He grabs it, opens it and inside finds A COPY OF THE BOOK OF ROMAN RITUAL. He snatches it up and rushes out.

CUT TO:

85 INT. MERRIN'S ROOM IN EMEKWI'S HOTEL - NIGHT. 85

Merrin enters and quickly grabs a DUFFEL BAG out from under his bed. He opens it, tosses out some clothes and gear and then pulls out A SMALL, WATERPROOF BAG THAT CONTAINS:

A BLACK CASSOCK AND PURPLE STOLE -- THEY ARE JUST LIKE FRANCIS'S (BUT MERRIN HAS NO WHITE SURPLICE).

Merrin's determination is weakened momentarily by doubt; but then he PUTS THE SMALL BAG UNDER HIS SHOULDER AND EXITS.

CUT TO:

86 EXT. THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE - NIGHT. 86

All is now QUIET in the area, and a SMALL CAMPFIRE BURNS near the lorry in which Rachel still sits, APPARENTLY SLEEPING.

The Sergeant-Major is attending to Chuma and the wounded SOLDIERS near the fire.

Merrin APPEARS OUT OF THE DARKNESS ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE LORRY, DRESSED IN HIS PRIESTLY GARB AND LOOKING VERY DIFFERENT, NOW, ALMOST EERILY SO. He seems to know it, and does not approach the others, instead sitting on the running board of the lorry on its far side, away from the campfire.

He begins studying Francis's Book of Roman Rituals, MURMURING CERTAIN PASSAGES QUIETLY. Rachel's eyes open as he does, but she neither moves nor says anything for several minutes -- she simply watches him ambiguously.

MERRIN
"...Be uprooted and expelled from this creature of God."
(makes the sign of the cross)
"He who commands you is he who ordered you to be thrown down from the highest Heaven into the depths of Hell... Hear, therefore, and fear, Satan..."
(murmurs indistinctly; then:)
"...Lord, hear my prayer -- "

RACHEL
"And let my cry reach you..."

Merrin, startled, turns to find her watching him, her expression still blank and dazed.

MERRIN
You know this ritual?

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED:

RACHEL
Some tried it -- in Buchenwald. They tried everything...

MERRIN
(trying to examine her)
How are your wrists?

RACHEL
(pulling her hands back)
Don't.
(eyeing him)
I can't decide if you look impressive or absurd in that costume...

Merrin smiles and glances down at himself self-consciously.

RACHEL
Has your faith truly been reborn, then?

MERRIN
It's -- strange. Something has happened, I know that. Enough to tell me that I must wear these clothes, and do this thing.

RACHEL
That's not good enough, Merrin. Clothes, words... He'll see right through you... inside you... And you may not enjoy the experience...

MERRIN
You mustn't blame yourself, Rachel. You were in his thrall, the kind of lies that you --

RACHEL
They weren't lies.

Merrin looks surprised, even quietly shocked; Rachel continues to stare off at nothing.

RACHEL
Everything he said was true. The Nazis were killing anyone with medical training -- and so I lied about mine, and went on lying about it. I could have revealed it later -- secretly. I could have done something --

86 CONTINUED:

MERRIN
But -- you had no instruments, no medicines --

RACHEL
That's what I told myself. But the truth is, I was too busy using my body to stay alive -- and too afraid -- to give any help.

MERRIN
It's not that simple -- Rachel, the situation was <u>not that simple</u>.

RACHEL
I didn't think so, either -- <u>before</u>...

MERRIN
(gripping her shoulders)
That's <u>his</u> work, do you understand? And when he's gone --

RACHEL
He's not going anywhere, Merrin -- he's already <u>everywhere</u>...

Rachel stares off again, and Merrin gives up, moving over to the Sergeant-Major.

MERRIN
Keep a careful eye on her, Sergeant. You mustn't let her --

SERGEANT-MAJOR
I know, sir.
(studying Rachel)
I've seen that look before...
(to Merrin)
You'll be going back in, then, sir?

MERRIN
Yes. Now. And if I don't come back, you're to leave the place -- is that understood, Sergeant? Orders or no orders -- take the Doctor and Chuma and go. The Turkana will not harm you if they see you leaving.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
(nodding)
I'll have the Devil of a time explaining it --

86 CONTINUED: 86

The Sergeant-Major stops, realizing what he's said.

Merrin takes a deep breath and then glances into his hand, in which he holds:

The HALF A MEDALLION THAT THE ARAB HOLY MAN GAVE HIM EARLIER.

MERRIN
Well, then...
(going to Kio)
You'll be all right, my friend -- they'll get you out, with or without me.

CHUMA
With -- it will be with, Merrin. You will succeed.

Merrin tries to smile and nod; but it's clear he has very little hope or confidence.

In this mood, he APPROACHES THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE AND, AFTER TURNING TO TAKE WHAT MAY BE A FINAL LOOK AT THE OUTSIDE WORLD, ENTERS.

CUT TO:

87 INT. THE TEMPLE UNDER THE CHURCH - NIGHT. 87

Merrin steps into the room cautiously, to find it:

EMPTY. But the SOUND of CHECHE/SATAN'S BREATHING can be heard, and although it has no apparent source it becomes LOUDER AND ANGRIER, SNARLS PUNCTUATING THE OVERALL NOISE. It eventually RISES to such a volume that Merrin must cover his ears; and then finally, in a SHATTERING SHOUT, come the words:

CHECHE/SATAN
I AM DISAPPOINTED!

MERRIN IS SUDDENLY SWEPT OFF HIS FEET AND DROPPED PAINFULLY TO THE FLOOR.

Blood running from his nose, mouth, ears and eyes, Merrin looks up from the floor to see CHECHE/SATAN MOVING TOWARD HIM, AGAIN SUSPENDED IN THE AIR: his expression is one of barely-contained rage.

CHECHE/SATAN
There. Now you look like a man of God should -- prostrate. Suffering. Alone...
(shaking his head)
What do you imagine you're doing, Merrin?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

CHECHE/SATAN (cont'd)
Do you hope to sacrifice yourself, that the others outside may be spared? WE HAVE DISCUSSED THIS!

Merrin struggles to his feet uncertainly and pulls Francis's Book of Roman Rituals from his pocket, along with a SMALL SILVER CROSS, which he holds aloft. He SPEAKS waveringly, but steadily:

MERRIN
"Holy Lord -- look speedily and snatch from damnation and from this Devil your child, this boy, who was created in your image and likeness -- "

CHECHE/SATAN
What -- is it <u>possible</u>? <u>AN EXORCISM</u>?!

Suddenly Cheche/Satan's furious expression breaks into one of glee, and he ROARS WITH LAUGHTER.

CHECHE/SATAN
Oh, let me help you, Merrin -- "I exorcise you, Most Unclean Spirit! Invading enemy! In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ -- "
(makes a mocking sign of the cross)
" -- be uprooted and expelled from this creature of God!"
(looking down at himself)
What's this?! Why, it's not working, Merrin!

Merrin now stands silent, staring up at Cheche/Satan in stunned bewilderment.

MERRIN
How can you -- say these words --

CHECHE/SATAN
<u>How</u>?! Do you know how many exorcists people my Dominion, Merrin?! Can you imagine how greatly I am amused at the torment through which they have put the innocent, the weak, the feeble-minded, throughout the ages?!
(laughing again)
This is a joke, surely, Merrin!

MERRIN
Then -- is there truly -- no hope...?

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

CHECHE/SATAN
From such childish documents as <u>that</u>?

The book FLIES OUT OF MERRIN'S HANDS AND ACROSS THE ROOM.

CHECHE/SATAN
Merrin, it is unworthy of you! <u>I</u> am your hope! You have <u>seen</u> God for what he is, and been offered a place by my side!

MERRIN
(still dazed)
Because I am a priest -- a man of God... Because mine would be the greatest of betrayals, you offer me all this...

CHECHE/SATAN
Yes, yes! But do not make me impatient, Merrin -- do not make me doubt your wisdom!

MERRIN
(shaking his head)
No... No -- you <u>lie</u>...

Merrin REACHES INTO HIS POCKET AND PRODUCES THE HALF OF THE MEDALLION.

MERRIN
This was given to me by another of your servants. He, too, seemed to have been a man of God, once.

CHECHE/SATAN
(still impatiently)
Really? How interesting...

MERRIN
He asked me to return it to you -- and to beg you to have mercy on his soul. He is ridden with disease, now -- dying. He didn't look delighted. Or even content. Did you promise him those things, too? Can you even remember him?

CHECHE/SATAN
(a hiss of disgust)
You creatures -- you all think you're so special when you give yourselves up! How can <u>I</u> be expected to remember --

Cheche/Satan STOPS IN MID-SENTENCE: FOR THE FIRST TIME HE'S MADE A TACTICAL ERROR, AND HE KNOWS IT; SO DOES MERRIN.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

MERRIN
It's not we who think we're special -- it's you, liar, who tell us we are. And then forget our names...

CHECHE/SATAN
And does God remember you?!

As suddenly as before MERRIN IS SWEPT UP OFF THE GROUND and ONTO THE ALTAR;

When he lands on it BONDS APPEAR TO SECURE HIS HANDS AND FEET.

CHECHE/SATAN
Do you have any idea of the kinds of things that went on in this room, Merrin?!

As Cheche/Satan speaks on, we begin to HEAR DISTANT, HORRIFYING CRIES OF AGONY: MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN, DOZENS OF THEM, GROWING IN VOLUME.

At the same time, GHOSTLY BUT TERRIBLE IMAGES OF THESE TORTURED SOULS BEGIN TO APPEAR IN THE AIR AROUND THE ALTAR, REFLECTING WHAT CHECHE/SATAN DESCRIBES:

CHECHE/SATAN
Men, women, and oh, most especially children, Merrin -- their bowels and organs would be cut out as they watched and screamed -- their skulls would be cracked and their minds ladled out like feces -- the blood would pour, and the holy men would drink it and paint themselves with it -- AND WHERE WAS GOD?! And in your own time, when other innocents -- some good Christians -- were slaughtered by the millions, WAS GOD'S MEMORY ANY BETTER?!

Suddenly NEW IMAGES APPEAR AROUND MERRIN:

THE PLEADING FACES OF THE VILLAGERS HE PICKED FOR EXECUTION IN HOLLAND, PARTICULARLY JOOST HARMENSZ

CHECHE/SATAN
DID HE REMEMBER YOUR NAME WHEN YOU BEGGED HIM TO SAVE YOUR FLOCK?!

Cheche/Satan flicks his hands and AGAIN MERRIN FLIES THROUGH THE AIR, AGAINST THE REAR WALL OF THE CHAMBER. Merrin struggles to his hands and knees, breathing hard, and the

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

GHOSTLY IMAGES AROUND HIM DISSIPATE. An eerie QUIET settles over the room.

MERRIN
Why...? Why -- do you do this...? Why not just kill me...?

CHECHE/SATAN
Because killing you does not please me.

MERRIN
No.
(a glimmer of comprehension)
Because killing me does not help you...
(struggling to his feet)
He told me... Francis told me...

Cheche/Satan looks INCREASINGLY UNCOMFORTABLE.

CHECHE/SATAN
And what did that sexless fool tell you?

MERRIN
That God let me wander from him... but that he would show me a way back... I have not understood all the suffering that I have seen -- but you --
(looking up, stronger)
You yourself have shown me God's message -- and his purpose for me...

CHECHE/SATAN
Be careful, Merrin -- I do not wish to harm you --

MERRIN
Because you fear me.

CHECHE/SATAN
I? Fear you?!

And suddenly MERRIN IS BEATEN TO THE GROUND BY A FLURRY OF INVISIBLE, POWERFUL BLOWS.

CHECHE/SATAN
ON YOUR KNEES, PRIEST, AND RECANT THAT PRESUMPTION!

MERRIN
Yes -- priest...

With almost superhuman effort, Merrin GETS BACK TO HIS FEET AND STRUGGLES OVER TO WHERE THE COPY OF THE ROMAN BOOK OF RITUALS LIES; HE PICKS IT UP.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

MERRIN
You do not fear the words, as Rachel said. Nor the trappings --
(indicates his clothes)
-- nor any of the rest of it... The man of God who has abandoned God -- you say you prize him most of all. But the man of God who hears your offer and then returns to his calling -- such a man you fear above all others.

CHECHE/SATAN
You dare tell me what I fear...?

MERRIN
(moving forward)
Yes... One such as I can dare. All the brutality that I have witnessed -- all the confusion that has possessed my spirit -- it has led me to this place and this moment. To the purpose for which God has refined me in the furnace of despair. And for as long as I continue to draw breath, I will serve that purpose. To face you. To defeat you...

CHECHE/SATAN
I WILL DESTROY YOU!

MERRIN
(shaking his head)
You cannot. Because for all your threats, you have no power over God. And in helping me realize His plan, you have only revealed yourself to be a part of that plan. A pawn in it. As you always are...

CHECHE/SATAN
NO!!!

MERRIN
(quietly; looking up)
"Most glorious Prince of the Heavenly Army, Holy Michael the Archangel, defend me in battle against the Prince and Ruler of Darkness..."

Merrin WHIPS BOTH HIS CROSS AND FRANCIS'S BOOK UP BEFORE HIM: BUT HE DOES NOT READ FROM THE BOOK, NOW -- HE RECITES IN A STRONG VOICE AS IF HE CAN SEE THE PAGES IN HIS MIND:

87 CONTINUED:

MERRIN
"GO OUT OF THIS CHILD, CRIMINAL! GO OUT WITH ALL YOUR FALSEHOODS! I EXORCISE THEE!"

CHECHE/SATAN
BE SILENT, YOU MISERABLE COWARD --

Suddenly we see a SHOT OF CHECHE/SATAN'S HORRIFIED FACE -- HIS EYES BECOME CHECHE'S AGAIN, AS DOES HIS VOICE:

CHECHE
Baba...?

BUT THEN THE GOLDEN EYES RETURN, AND CHECHE/SATAN SCREAMS AND HOLDS UP A HAND.

CHECHE/SATAN
FOOL -- I WILL DESTROY YOU BOTH!

MERRIN IS HAMMERED BACKWARD AGAIN, BUT HE QUICKLY REGAINS HIS FEET.

MERRIN
"I EXORCISE THEE, MOST UNCLEAN SPIRIT! INVADING ENEMY! HEAR AND BE AFRAID, SATAN, ENEMY OF THE HUMAN RACE AND SOURCE OF DEATH!"

Cheche/Satan CONTINUES TO BELLOW; BUT HE NOW SEEMS TO BE TAKING INVISIBLE BLOWS HIMSELF -- HIS BODY CONTORTS AT MERRIN'S WORDS, AND AS HE TRIES TO LIFT HIS ARM TO STRIKE AT MERRIN AGAIN HE FINDS THAT HE CANNOT.

Merrin's own strength CONTINUES TO GROW.

MERRIN
"WHY DO YOU STAY AND RESIST, CREATOR OF AGONY, WHEN YOU KNOW THAT YOUR PLAN IS DESTROYED?! UNHOLY TEMPTOR -- TAKE FLIGHT!"

CHECHE/SATAN
AND IF I GO, WHAT WILL I TAKE WITH ME?!

Cheche/Satan COLLAPSES TO THE GROUND IN A SUDDEN MOVEMENT; and when he looks up next, the EYES HAVE CHANGED AGAIN; but now:

THE BODY HAS BEGUN TO CHANGE, TOO: once again we HEAR THE SNAP OF BONES, and see Cheche's ARM AND LEG BEGIN TO WITHER AND TWIST INTO THEIR OLD POSITIONS.

87 CONTINUED:

But Satan's VOICE speaks through the boy one more time:

CHECHE/SATAN
It is <u>you</u> who do this to the boy, Merrin! <u>This</u> is the love of God that you bring to the world, priest!

Merrin's face grows pained; and as he SPEAKS MORE, HIS EYES WELL UP WITH TEARS OF SYMPATHY FOR THE AGONIZED BOY.

MERRIN
"Repel, O Lord, the power of this Evil Prince! Dissolve the fallacies of his plots!"

Cheche now looks up at Merrin in terror and pain.

CHECHE
Baba...?! Help -- Cheche!

MERRIN
(pressing on)
"God has willed Man to be his temple!"

Merrin winces at these ironic words: FOR ALL THE OLD SCARS AND SORES ARE RETURNING TO CHECHE'S BODY.

CHECHE
Baba -- Cheche -- hurt...

Cheche finally passes out from the pain of his transformation. As he does Merrin finishes his job:

MERRIN
"Therefore depart, Cursed One! I EXORCISE THEE! I -- exorcise -- thee..."

Exhausted, Merrin crumples to his knees, then looks up to see:

That CHECHE HAS RETURNED FULLY TO HIS FORMER CRIPPLED, DEFORMED SELF. The sight is enough to make Merrin WEEP SILENTLY as he crawls over to embrace the boy.

MERRIN
(barely audible)
"In the name... of God..."

DISSOLVE TO:

88 EXT. VARIOUS ANGLES IN AND AROUND LODWAR - DAYBREAK. 88

We see the SUN COMING UP OVER THE HILLS OUTSIDE LODWAR, and the RETURN OF SOME SEMBLANCE OF NORMALCY TO THE AREA:

TURKANA WORKERS strike the tent outside the CAVE DIG;

BRITISH SOLDIERS are similarly striking their CAMP outside town;

Emekwi sweeps out the entryway of his hotel, and other TOWNSPEOPLE PULL UP THE SHUTTERS OF THEIR SHOPS AND STALLS AND BEGIN TO PREPARE FOR A NEW DAY OF NORMAL BUSINESS;

And outside the hospital, Merrin stands with RACHEL, SEBITUANA, and the SERGEANT-MAJOR.

Merrin speaks with Sebituana, and Rachel TRANSLATES.

MERRIN
The white soldiers are leaving, Sebituana -- everything will be as it was.

RACHEL
(after Sebituana speaks)
He wants to know --
(an uneasy look at Merrin)
He wants to know if the Devil in the cave is gone forever.

MERRIN
(a beat)
Tell him that no man can see forever. But for now, his people are safe.

RACHEL
(after Sebituana speaks)
And the church in the cave?

MERRIN
More scientists will come to explore it soon. But he must not worry -- they know what I have promised, and they will respect the Turkana.

Sebituana gives Merrin a long, serious look, then nods once and SPEAKS some final words before turning to go.

MERRIN
What did he say?

88 CONTINUED:

RACHEL
He said that he wishes you courage and strength -- because the Devil in the cave is your enemy, now. And he will pursue you...

Rachel slowly turns and ENTERS THE HOSPITAL, WHERE WE CAN SEE CHECHE AND CHUMA LYING ON COTS.

The Sergeant-Major, sensing the moment, quietly says:

SERGEANT-MAJOR
We should be ready to pull out within the hour, sir. But we'll wait longer, if you need the time.

MERRIN
Thank you, Sergeant. But I'll be ready.

SERGEANT-MAJOR
Sir.
(starts to salute, then stops and smiles)
Beg pardon. Force of habit -- Father...

The Sergeant-Major turns and walks away, and Merrin slowly enters the hospital.

CUT TO:

89 INT. RACHEL'S HOSPITAL - DAY. 89

Rachel checks on Cheche and Chuma, both of whom are unconscious. Merrin approaches her carefully.

MERRIN
I'm -- sorry to leave like this.

RACHEL
Like what?

MERRIN
Well -- suddenly. I thought --

RACHEL
(smiling)
I know. So did I.
(touching his face)
But God has chosen a different path for you.

89 CONTINUED:

MERRIN
(nodding)
And you? Will you be all right?

RACHEL
I survived one hell, Merrin. I will survive this, too. At least now I can give the help that I should have -- then...

MERRIN
And if you'd tried then, and been shot for it -- as you would have been -- there'd be no help for these people now. You do understand that?

RACHEL
(nodding)
God, it seems, has revealed his plan for me, too...
(studying Merrin)
Where will you go?

MERRIN
Rome, first. To tell them what's happened. After that -- I'm not sure...

Both Merrin and Rachel turn when they hear a small MOAN come from Cheche. They go to his bedside, Rachel checking his pulse and temperature quickly.

RACHEL
He's all right -- just waking up. Cheche? Can you hear me?
(in Turkana, subtitled)
[Can you hear me, Cheche?]

Cheche glances in mild disorientation, but without fear; he smiles when he sees Merrin.

CHECHE
Baba...
(eyeing Merrin's cassock)
Baba -- go?

RACHEL
(to Merrin)
He seems to have no memory of any of it. Is that unusual?

MERRIN
I'm not sure. But I'm grateful...
(nodding to Cheche)
(MORE)

89 CONTINUED: 89

MERRIN (cont'd)
Yes, Cheche. Baba go. The Doctor will take care of you.

Cheche looks crestfallen, but as though he somehow understands; and then he glances down at his leg.

CHECHE
Cheche's leg... no good...

MERRIN
(touching the boy's head)
I'm so sorry, Cheche...

CHECHE
No, Baba... Beh-dur --
(looking Merrin in the eye)
-- beh-dur -- this way...

Merrin and Rachel exchange A LOOK OF QUIET AMAZEMENT.

CUT TO:

90 EXT. RACHEL'S HOSPITAL -- DAY. 90

The British lorries, SOLDIERS all loaded aboard, are pulled up and idling outside the hospital.

Rachel walks Merrin to the passenger seat of one lorry. He carries FRANCIS'S SUITCASE.

Merrin pauses before climbing into the lorry.

MERRIN
Well, then, I -- I'll --

RACHEL
(a smile)
You'll write?
(off Merrin's self-conscious smile)
Actually, do, Merrin...
(kissing his cheek, whispering)
It will help me to know that you're alive...

Merrin nods once and gets into the lorry. It pulls away and then out of town.

DISSOLVE TO:

91 EXT. A CITY STREET - NIGHT. 91

FEDERAL-ERA BROWNSTONES line the dark street. A SINGLE STREET LAMP SPILLS A LONE POOL OF LIGHT ONTO THE SIDEWALK.

A LEGEND APPEARS and then FADES AWAY:

THE GEORGETOWN SECTION OF WASHINGTON, D.C.:
1973

A DARK FIGURE slowly walks along the sidewalk. As he steps into the POOL OF LIGHT WE SEE HIM:

AN OLD MAN, carrying A BATTERED, FORTIES-ERA SUITCASE. He heads for A GATE ALONG THE STREET;

He pauses, looking up at a LIT WINDOW, in which we see:

A STRANGE SILHOUETTE.

The old man pushes the gate open.

CUT TO:

92 EXT. THE HOUSE'S FRONT DOOR - NIGHT. 92

The old man RINGS THE DOORBELL and waits. The door OPENS, and a WOMAN -- CHRIS MACNEIL -- peers out at him, her face drawn and anxious.

The old man smiles; but most of his face is OBSCURED IN SHADOW.

CHRIS
Can I help you?

The old man replies in a gentle, weary VOICE:

OLD MAN
I'm Father Merrin...

MUSIC COMES UP.

FADE TO BLACK.